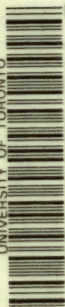


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George Pardon Bryce.
from his wife.

June 14. 1918.



THE FOURTH GOSPEL

THE FOURTH GOSPEL

ITS SIGNIFICANCE
AND ENVIRONMENT

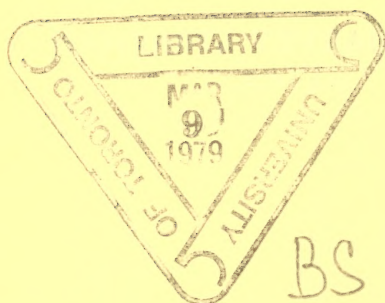
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ABBREVIATIONS

- Bevan, *SS*—"Stoics and Sceptics." E. Bevan. 1913.
 Davidson, *SC*—"The Stoic Creed." W. L. Davidson. 1907.
 Drummond, *CAFG*—"The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel." J. Drummond. 1903.
 Harrison, *AAR*—"Ancient Art and Ritual." J. Harrison. 1915.
 Hastings, *DCG*—"Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels." Edited by J. Hastings. Vol. i., 1906; vol. ii., 1908.
 Johnston, *PFG*—"The Philosophy of the Fourth Gospel." J. S. Johnston. 1909.
 Kennedy, *PMR*—"St Paul and the Mystery-Religions." H. A. A. Kennedy. 1914.
 Mackintosh, *PJC*—"The Person of Jesus Christ." H. R. Mackintosh. (S.C.M., 1912.)
 Moffatt, *LNT*—"Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament." J. Moffatt. 1911.
 Moffatt, *TG*—"The Theology of the Gospels." J. Moffatt. 1912.
 Murray, *FSGR*—"Four Stages of Greek Religion." Gilbert Murray. 1912.
 Scott, *FG*—"The Fourth Gospel." E. F. Scott. 1906.
 Scott, *VFG*—"The Historical and Religious Value of the Fourth Gospel." E. F. Scott. 1910.

PREFACE

A COMPLETE statement of the problem of the Fourth Gospel has not been attempted in these pages. Rather the object has been to aid students of the English Bible to reconstruct for themselves the environment in and for which the Gospel presumably was written. Each Biblical writer has a message primarily for his own time, and it is impossible for us to obtain either the full devotional or instructional value of Scripture without first ascertaining what these writers really meant to say to their contemporaries. Scholars are gradually enabling us to rethink the writers' thoughts and to realise their intentions; nowhere is our debt greater to New Testament scholarship in this regard than in the case of the Fourth Gospel. The historical method of interpretation applied to the New Testament is proving itself essentially constructive, and a powerful ally of the devotional life; for men in every age are wonderfully alike when moved by the Spirit that leads into "all the truth," just as the religious difficulties of every age are wonderfully akin when properly interpreted.

I have become convinced that the key to the understanding of the Fourth Gospel is to regard it as an *apologia* for the Christian faith, as it emerged A.D. 90-110. With regard to the question of authorship, the arguments for and against the apostolic authorship will be found in many competent commentaries, textbooks, and dictionary articles, and need not be repeated here. The position adopted in this book is that memoirs of the Apostle John and reports of his preaching form the basis of the whole work, which has been put into its

final shape by an Editor, who ignores the ideal¹ plan on which the Johannine material was originally arranged, and fits it into a chronological framework. For a fuller statement of the two plans of construction the reader must be referred to the Introduction, Chapter IV.

The *milieu* of the Gospel is much more important, and the description of it which I have ventured to give is based on years of study and thought given to this Gospel alone. For this evangelist, the person of Jesus Christ is the centre of the Christian faith as he knew it and preached it. Christianity began by claiming to be the world-religion, and in full response to its daring missionary motive it acted and reacted, as it always does, on the thought of the time. The Fourth Gospel is the classical answer, given by the Christian Church to the question of questions which the living Christ puts to every succeeding age—"Who say ye that I am?" Both in the Introduction, and in the Exposition which follows, this missionary motive has been kept in view.

Certain portions of the text, particularly in the Introduction, Chapter III., are set in smaller print. These may be passed over, except by more advanced students.

I would like to express my indebtedness to the Rev. Leslie S. Hunter for his help in the reading of the proofs, and for the question-scheme which he has kindly prepared for the book.

R. H. STRACHAN.

CAMBRIDGE, 1917.

¹ For the significance of this term as so applied, see pp. 54 ff.

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THE FOURTH GOSPEL

CHAPTER I

THE CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL

THE Fourth Evangelist states simply, in his preface, that his book is a record of the Word that "became flesh." He means that Jesus, of whom he writes, was a real human personality, "flesh." We may compare the opening verses of the First Epistle. This leads us to conclude that what is written in the Gospel is meant to be taken at least as founded on history; and not only on history, but on the actual personal experience of an eye-witness (or eye-witnesses; cf. i. 14 and 1 John i. 1-3).

When, however, we examine the impression which this history makes upon us, the question immediately rises to our lips, "If this is history, what then is the Synoptic story of the life of Jesus?" It is quite insufficient to allay our perplexity to answer that this Gospel is meant to supplement, and at times to correct, the earlier Gospels. It is indeed true that in places it does both in a very real sense, but that can only be a subordinate result of a Gospel that is cast in such an entirely different mould compared with the other three.

Let us set out briefly some of the points of difference as compared with the Synoptics:—

I. Certain **miracles** of Jesus are recorded. What strikes us, among other things, about these miracles of Jesus is the *name* by which the Evangelist describes them. He calls them "signs."¹ The other three Evangelists use a word which

¹ "Works" would seem to include more than miracles. It is also more than probable that "signs" (*e.g.* xx. 30) includes more than what we call miracles.

means "acts of power." When the Fourth Evangelist speaks of them merely in themselves, as events, he calls them "works" or "deeds." Generally, however, he speaks of them as "signs." Signs of what? Indications of what?

In the case of the Synoptic miracles, we receive the impression that Jesus was always unwilling to work miracles as mere displays; and that when He did heal a man, or miraculously feed a multitude, or still a storm, it was because he was actuated by compassion, or by a desire to help people in a difficult or dangerous situation. He exercised His power because He loved men, and in a sense could not help it. In other words, the Synoptic miracles appear to be spontaneous. The motive of compassion, or the character of spontaneity, is not entirely absent in the Fourth Gospel. Prevailing, however, in the mind of this Evangelist, miracles are *evidential*—evidences or signs that demonstrate Who Jesus is. He says, for example, in ii. 11, "*This beginning of signs Jesus made in Cana of Galilee,*" and manifested His glory. The "signs" are demonstrations of the "glory" of Jesus (see note on "Glory," pp. 75 f.).

II. We are also struck by the fact that, in almost every case where a miracle is wrought, it forms the introduction to a long discourse, discussion, or controversy. The style of these **Discourses** strikes us as peculiar.

It is quite apparent that Jesus' manner of speaking in the Fourth Gospel is very different from the style with which we are familiar in the Synoptics. The difference may be, and has been exaggerated, but the general fact of a profound difference remains. It is also remarkable that practically *the whole Gospel is written in the same style*. The Baptist talks like Jesus in iii. 27-30. The Gospel contains certain passages which are clearly the Evangelist's own comments and reflections on what has gone before. One notable instance is iii. 16-36, where he writes in exactly the same style as that in which he makes Jesus or the Baptist speak. Moreover, this style is the same as we find in the First Epistle. It is distinguished by a certain monotony which is in most cases very impressive.

All this is an indication that the Evangelist has taken no pains to dissociate his own mental idiosyncrasy from his representation of the thinking of his various characters, including even Jesus Himself.

Here, certain considerations may be brought forward to enable us to understand why such apparent liberties should be taken, particularly with the actual words of Jesus.

(1) Jesus certainly spoke two languages, Aramaic and Greek. Aramaic was a dialect of Hebrew, and might be called His native tongue. It was the vernacular of Palestine. If, therefore, the Evangelist is often translating into Greek, it is natural that he should employ his own style in so doing.

(2) In Hebrew and in Aramaic there is no such construction as *oratio obliqua*. The Evangelist is clearly a Jew of Palestine. A Hebrew never wrote, "And it was told Solomon that Adonijah was afraid of him," but, "And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth King Solomon" (1 Kings i. 51). Thus, if the Evangelist desired to record words of Jesus, the only form open to him as a Hebrew was to begin, "Jesus said." He is a Jew writing in Greek. *Oratio recta* under modern circumstances gives the narrator no opportunity of impressing his own style on what he records; but when, as in the case of this Evangelist, his purpose is not merely to record words of Jesus and events in His life, but to expand the inner meaning of Jesus' teaching, and to give it an application to the contemporary religious situation (pp. 22 ff.), it is quite clear that, under the form of *oratio recta*, much would necessarily be included which was never actually uttered in words, and the Evangelist's own style would obtrude itself.

(3) When a Hebrew prophet used the expression, "Thus saith the Lord," he did not mean that these actual words were heard by him with the outward ear, but that, by the inspiration of God, which was always conditioned by the actual historical circumstances and the psychology of the writer, he spoke with certainty and authority the mind of God on a particular situation. He might have said, "This is the will of God," or, "This is the mind and purpose in the heart of God." It is

interesting to notice that the Hebrew *amar*, which means usually "say," is also used for "think." In 2 Kings v. 11, for example, Naaman is represented as using the words, "Behold, I *thought*, He will surely come out unto me." It would have been literally accurate to translate, "Behold, I said"; yet no one supposes that Naaman actually *uttered* these words before his meeting with Elisha. They describe the unspoken thought in his heart. Accordingly, it need not surprise us that John should use the formula, "And Jesus said," when he actually gives his own interpretation both of the mind and of the traditional words of Jesus. The Jesus who is speaking is for him, not the Jesus of history, but the risen Jesus.¹ The Evangelist is conscious of His Presence, and of uttering His thoughts, as a Hebrew prophet was conscious of God. He believes himself to be acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (xvi. 12, 13).

(4) It is wrong completely to ignore the Gospel as a source for actual *sayings of Jesus*. When we examine closely the Johannine discourses they are full of just the same kind of brief, concise, pithy sayings that characterise the speech of Jesus in the Synoptics. A very exhaustive collection of such sayings will be found in Drummond (*CAFG*, note, p. 16). These words of his may be quoted. "The writer himself probably could not have told us in the case of the longer speeches that this was said in the flesh and that in the spirit, nor did he care to make such an analysis. Christ was always speaking those things to his listening soul, and what did it matter if he had not heard these precise words in Palestine, when they came to him straight out of the heart of the Beloved? We, too, may well withhold our hands from the seamless robe" (*ib.* p. 41).

(5) At the same time what has been said does not exclude the possibility that there was a deeper, perhaps more *mystical element in the utterances of Jesus* than we find in the Synoptics. Even there we find sayings like the sayings in the Fourth Gospel.

¹ Cf. Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*, 15: "He that hath the word of Jesus truly, can hear His silence also."

notably Matt. viii. 5 ; x. 40, and the great passage, Matt. xi. 27 f. If there was not this deeper element in the consciousness of Jesus, it is difficult to account for even this scanty appearance of it in the Synoptics.

(6) We are still, however, far from an explanation of the peculiar form of the Discourses. Can we suppose that the constant element of **controversy** about His Person, about the Sabbath, or about the Eucharist (as in chap. vi.), which we find in these long arguments, is characteristic of the speech of the historical Jesus ?

We have already seen why it is that the Evangelist never records in indirect speech. There can also be little doubt that in his task of conveying to his readers the mind of Jesus, as he realised it at the time he wrote, and in vindicating before the Greek world the exalted conception of the Person of Christ which the Church had come to hold, he is making use of a certain literary form which was current in a centre like Ephesus. What was this literary form ?

We are familiar with the Dialogue form in Plato, where Socrates argues with an imaginary opponent. The cultured Greek quite naturally put his thoughts into the form of dialogue. A great change, however, had come over philosophy at the time of the Christian era. It had become popular, and its aim didactic and moralistic. The "man in the street" debated points of religion and philosophy. The Stoics, and especially the Cynics, both encouraged and met the new spiritual movement stirring in the hearts of men by developing a class like the wandering friars, who preached their views all over the Greek world.¹ The kind of dialogue that would do in the academic atmosphere of the schools would not do for popular work of this kind. In speaking to a non-academic crowd, as distinct from students in the schools, *the dialogue would tend to become more a sermon or discourse*. The people to whom the wandering philosopher was speaking were not fitted to carry on an argument in academic fashion, and the philosopher himself gave an expression to their thoughts, prejudices,

¹ See further, p. 29.

and objections, before he answered them. He would either read their faces as they listened, or deal with points he had heard raised. This kind of address was called a *Diatribē*, or Discourse.¹

Now the early Christian preachers, with their new doctrine of salvation by Jesus, especially where they encountered the Greek world, would be influenced by this form of speech. The Discourses in the Fourth Gospel are really a kind of preaching, modelled partly on the Synagogue discourses, and partly on the *Diatribē*. The habit of the Christian preacher was, say, to take an historical incident, such as the healing of the man at Bethesda, and make it the subject of a discourse or discussion, based on words and thoughts of Jesus, which may once have had another historical setting altogether. These controversies are not necessarily devoid of historical basis. Jesus Himself must have had arguments with the Jews on legal points, like the question of the Sabbath. These are adapted to the contemporary situation.

In all probability the Fourth Gospel contains notes and recollections of the preaching of the Apostle John, mostly written down by his own hand. Probably, then, most of the Gospel would be spoken before it was written. When we read the Gospel to-day, and become entangled in its movements of thought, it is necessary to realise that many of these arguments, say, about the Sabbath, about the Manna in the wilderness, and about the Baptist were once living appeals in the name of Jesus Christ to the faith of those who were already familiar with the Old Testament, and especially with the Hellenistic interpretations of it. We must think of eager faces looking up into the face of the preacher, and thirsty hearts receiving the living water. Imagination fails to realise what new depths in the personality and sayings of Jesus would be sounded, in the presence of such audiences. Even after the Gospel was written down it would be read *to*, and very seldom by, those for whom it was intended, in their meetings for worship.

III. Another question arises, especially with regard to the

¹ Moffatt, *LNT*, pp. 44 ff.

narrative portions of the Gospel. If this is history, **where is the touch with actual contemporary reality in the time of Jesus?** Where are the *parables*, with their vivid pictures of human life? Where are the *publicans and sinners* among whom so much of His life was spent, and to whom so much of His ministry was directed? Nicodemus, the Woman of Samaria, Martha and Mary, and others cannot take their place. We certainly hear a good deal of the *crowd or multitude*, but it is a remarkably theological multitude. They are always discussing one theme, whether this is the Messiah. Some of them accept Jesus, and some doubt, and some reject. Where are *the sick and the suffering* that were laid at His feet? "Sir, come down ere my child die" is the most lifelike cry in the whole Gospel, and it comes from the breaking heart of a nobleman of Capernaum. The scene, moreover, of the ministry is laid preponderatingly in Jerusalem and not in Galilee. We feel that the *parables* of the Good Shepherd or the True Vine are not parables in the Synoptic sense, but rather elaborate allegories. We miss the toilsome journey of search in the wilderness, the sheep upon the shoulder of the Shepherd, and the rejoicing friends and neighbours. These difficulties may be put into more definite shape.

(1) We are struck with the fact that *from the beginning of the narrative Jesus is recognised as the Messiah*. This is in strong contrast to the Synoptic conception, in which there is a distinct progress in the acknowledgment of the Messiahship of Jesus, culminating in the Great Confession at Cæsarea-Philippi, where Peter is the mouthpiece. It is as though Jesus had waited until these men who companied with Him had developed spiritual insight and a corresponding audacity sufficient to hail Him as Messiah in the sense He Himself understood the office. Then, with this great belief to rest upon—the "rock" of His church—He had felt free to tell them that He must die. In the Johannine Gospel, however, the little group of disciples in the first chapter hail Him as Messiah, and the Baptist points to Him as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He is from the first the Son of Man, "Who came down from heaven."

He is also the Son of Man who must be "lifted up" or crucified.¹

(2) One other general characteristic may be mentioned. All through the Gospel *there is a strange apparent lack of interest in the details of the historical setting*. That seems a strange thing to say of a Gospel where there are so many exact notes of time, such as mention of the day and sometimes the very hour when something occurred ; where exact numbers are given, such as the six stone water-pots holding two or three firkins apiece ; which mentions that it was a little boy that supplied the food which was miraculously multiplied, and that the loaves were *barley* loaves ; or that "the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume" with which Christ's feet were anointed by Mary.² On the other hand we have to take into account facts like the following. Nicodemus appears to interview Jesus, and after a verse or two he disappears out of the narrative. We ask in vain what was the result of that conversation in his case. The other two places where he appears do not help us to decide, only to conjecture. Another striking instance is the occasion in chap. xii., where the "Greeks" come to see Jesus. We are not even told whether they were really ushered into His presence. The ordinary reader asks instinctively, "Was their request granted or refused?" Instead, the mere announcement of the fact of their presence is made the occasion of a fairly long discourse of Jesus on the subject of His death, and its meaning for the world. This treatment of Nicodemus and others, and of the Greeks, as more or less "lay-figures," is at once a tribute to the historical basis that underlies the Gospel, and an indication that *the writer's interest is in ideas and not in persons*. Peter, for example, is left without mention in the Johannine material, after his denial, and it is left to R.³ (xx. 2-10) and

¹ This particular difficulty is largely removed if we accept the attempt at a literary analysis of the Gospel suggested in chapter iv. The real Johannine material is not arranged in strictly chronological order.

² Cf. A. S. Peake, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 204.

³ The symbol used for the work of the Editor who has given the Gospel its present form. (See chap. iv.)

to the author of chap. xxi. to supply the omission (xxi. 15 ff.).

(3) In addition to all this, we find that the *Fourth Evangelist almost entirely omits the ministry in Galilee and practically lays the whole scene in Jerusalem*. That he amplifies the Synoptic tradition in this respect, and that there must have been a larger and longer ministry in Jerusalem than is elsewhere related, are practically certain. There are certain indications of this in the Synoptics themselves. Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to attend on the Galilean ministry (Luke v. 17; Mark iii. 12, vii. 1). Judas was a native of Kerioth in Judea. Joseph of Arimathea probably resided in Jerusalem, and his friendship with Jesus has to be explained. The intimacy with Martha and Mary points to frequent visits to Bethany. We have also the "How often" of Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 22, 33, 34, which points not only to unfulfilled desire, but to baffled effort. After the Ascension the disciples make their headquarters in Jerusalem. It is well-nigh impossible to explain the attitude of the authorities and many incidents of the closing days (e.g. the friend at whose house the Last Supper took place), unless by the supposition of a previous Jerusalem ministry.

(4) The subject of *Eschatology* has come into great prominence lately in connection with the Synoptic Gospels. All readers of the Fourth Gospel must have noticed that instead of these vivid chapters which in the Synoptics (Matt. xxiv. 4-36; Mark xiii. 5-37; Luke xxi. 8-36) are inserted immediately before the story of the Passion, we have in their place chaps. xiv.-xvii. A full treatment of these must be reserved (see pp. 174 ff.), but in the meantime it is necessary that we should be put on our guard against supposing that Jesus spoke of His "Return" only in the language of apocalyptic imagery. I believe that the Fourth Evangelist has taken no unwarrantable liberties with the self-consciousness of Jesus, and that the absence of lurid apocalyptic detail in the Fourth Gospel cannot be entirely explained by saying that the Evangelist has transmuted it into more spiritual teaching. Jesus had, no doubt, trans-

muted some of it before him. He has omitted nearly all the imagery except in one or two passages (*e.g.* i. 51 ; v. 28, 29 ; vi. 40, 44). Has he given us a clue to Jesus' undoubted use of such imagery ? Has he not omitted the imagery because he is writing for Greeks, or for Jews steeped in Greek forms of thought ? No one surely ought to think that the land of Canaan actually flowed with milk and honey, or that when Isaiah (xi. 6-8) speaks of the wolf dwelling with the lamb, or the cow and the bear feeding together, or the sucking child playing on the hole of the adder, he really means these literal facts ! Surely what Isaiah does mean he tells us in *v.* 9, *viz.*, that in that glorious Messianic time peace will reign, and all that is hurtful and destructive will vanish. The prophets constantly used imagery in this way, and a great deal of their imagery passed into ordinary religious speech. Sometimes they interpreted their own imagery to their hearers. Jesus' thought is full of echoes of the prophetic teaching.

As regards the expression "Son of Man" in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus evidently took it from Daniel vii. 13 ff.¹ There, however, it is applied to the nation and not to the individual ; but in the New Testament the conception, in the main, of this puzzling term is that in Christ, in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, the fortunes of the Jewish nation are represented, and the promise of their history fulfilled. In none of the Gospels is it set forth so tragically as in the Fourth, that the chosen nation rejected Jesus. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." In this Gospel, the "Son of Man," the personal embodiment of their own highest hope and vocation foreshadowed in Daniel, has *come* in the person of Jesus. It is also noteworthy that in most cases where Jesus uses the title

¹ It has recently been suggested that the term "Son of Man" was not originally a Jewish idea, but was taken over (during the Exile), through Persian influences, into the Jewish Messianic thought, on its apocalyptic side. "A semi-mythological conception of some First Man, a heavenly personality parallel to the figure of the Messiah, who returns with divine powers of restoring life at the end of history" (Moffatt, *TG*, p. 158).

in the Synoptics, it is associated either with His coming to judgment or with His suffering. The same holds good in the Fourth Gospel (v. 27 ; xii. 23, 34). Now, the association of the title with suffering is a new thing in Jewish thought. The passages which associate the Son of Man with suffering point to a characteristic modification or expansion of the term by Jesus.¹ If, then, Jesus could modify, in His use of it, one eschatological term, why could He not modify and expand the whole eschatological imagery ? Undoubtedly He did. He undoubtedly used those apocalyptic terms of which Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii. are full, as forms in which He expressed His own thoughts of His person and significance for men. The Synoptic Evangelists only imperfectly understood Him ; for no doubt, in popular thought, much of the imagery had come to be taken literally, as in our own popular conceptions of heaven. The Fourth Evangelist does understand Him. He reinterpreted the consciousness of Jesus, bringing out the full meaning of the eschatological language. Jesus had moments of intense feeling which were also moments of keen and penetrating vision ; and at these times Jesus seems to have used apocalyptic and eschatological language most of all. Take for example the utterance in John viii. 58. Recall His words to the returning seventy in Luke x. 18, and compare them with John xii. 31, 32 or xiv. 30 ; or His warning to Peter in Luke xxii. 31-34, and the form it takes in John xiii. 36-38. Although John still cherishes the hope of the Second Coming, and in the Epistle talks of it as imminent (1 John ii. 18), yet in general the outward eschatological imagery and the glory of a dramatic interposition from heaven have disappeared. Why ? Perhaps for two reasons, at least :—

(1) Because he knew what Jesus meant, and knew that He did not always speak in this way about the future ;

(2) Because he wishes to emphasise the fact, true for him and for many another, that the "Coming One" is come, and that in the person of Jesus all that is glorious and divine is already manifested. The Second Coming is for him rather

¹ Moffatt, *TG*, p. 159.

a moral change and enlightenment of the believer than a new and startling manifestation of Jesus (1 John iii. 2, 3). The Fourth Evangelist shifts the emphasis from the *Parousia* to the moment when Jesus is "glorified" and the Holy Spirit is given (vii. 39). Is he right, and true to the real mind of Jesus? Did Jesus really see in His Cross and Resurrection and Ascension, regarded as one event, that Coming so imminent, both in the Synoptics and in this Gospel? ¹

¹ See notes on chap. xvi.

CHAPTER II

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

FORTUNATELY we have a clear statement of the purpose of the Gospel in xx. 30, 31. This passage, rightly understood, along with certain statements in the Prologue, is the key to the Evangelist's aim. Several things are stated in these verses.

(1) *That the author has a distinctly religious and missionary purpose.* "These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name." The same is true, to a lesser extent, of the Synoptic Gospels, although the writers do not so clearly express it, nor allow it so extensively to dominate the form of their writing.¹ The important thing to note is that John evidently means to afford evidence for a dogma or doctrine, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, which is founded on and completed in an experience described as "having life in His name." He writes at a time belonging to the end of the first century A.D., or to the very beginning of the second. The doctrine has two aspects: (a) *that Jesus is the Messiah*; (b) *that Jesus is the Son of God*. In this Gospel, these two aspects are not completely equivalent. The Son of God is more than the Jewish Messiah, and the fulfilment of merely Jewish hopes. Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. John speaks of men as "sons" (children) of God. Jesus is "*the* Son of God."² The power to become "children" is given to men through Jesus (i. 12). He has a unique relationship to God ("only-begotten"). He is the fulfilment of the

¹ Cf. Wrede, *Origin of the New Testament*, E. tr., p. 52.

² See p. 19.

world's hope in and longing for, not only a Messiah, but for God Himself. Jesus does perfectly the will of the Father, and reveals the Father's purpose of love in His life and death (iii. 16). In other words, the Evangelist's aim is to prove the Divinity of Jesus.

(2) It is, however, more than intellectual assent to a dogma that is required. The Christian must have *life in His name*. "Name" is here used in the Jewish sense. Our names have no necessary relationship to what we really are. The Jew was more particular, both in the names he gave to persons and to places. Joseph called his first-born son "Manasseh," in memory of his deliverance from trials (Gen. xli. 51). Samuel, in memory of a victory over the Philistines, calls a certain spot by the name "Ebenezer" (1 Sam. vii. 12). Similarly, the "name" of God is God Himself, as men have known and experienced Him, the revelation of God Himself in events of history and of human life (*e.g.* liv. 5; Isa. lxiv. 2). No usage is more common in the Old Testament. There is a similar use of the "name" of Jesus in the New Testament. To believe in the name of Jesus is to believe in, and to accept His claims, as substantiated in history, and in the experience of the Church and of individuals. To have "life in His name" is to come into a real and living relationship with Him, to "abide in Him," as is the more frequent phrase in the Johannine writings. To acknowledge Him as the unique revelation of God, in whom are perfectly revealed the will and the love of the Father, involves a new "life," a "new birth." The First Epistle states the thought more clearly: "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3). His aim is to bring his readers into the same fellowship with God that he himself enjoys. To "trust" in or to "believe in" Jesus or in the name of Jesus as the incarnation of the Divine Love is not mere intellectual assent. It does not mean that God ceased to be a mystery: "No man hath seen God at any time." It does mean that whether the mystery be that of thought, or suffering, or death, Jesus has made us sure, in the fact of His own life and death, that we can put ourselves wholly in God's

hands. "The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made God plain" (John i. 18). This trust in Jesus has supreme results in conduct, which is the side of the fellowship chiefly emphasised in the First Epistle: "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 5). It has also supreme results spiritually. It secures Eternal Life, victory over death, already here and now in the believer: "I am come that they might have life and might have it more abundantly." To John, unbelief is a state of death, even in life (v. 24). The believer "abides in Christ," and Christ "abides in him." This life is manifested finally as a life of "glory" (xvii. 22, 24). This latter aspect of the "life in His name" has the emphasis placed upon it in the Gospel. The two aspects are really the same. To John, love to God and love to man are two streams from the same source, life eternal (xvii. 3; 1 John iv. 7-21).

(3) The Evangelist also tells us in xx. 30, *that a selection of signs has been made out of many that were available*. We have already seen that the miracles of Jesus are regarded as transparencies through which was manifested the "glory" of Jesus. The Evangelist has therefore been guided in his selection of signs by the desire to take just those that are most suitable for his purpose in writing. Among these signs he seems to include the crowning sign of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Seven miracles, in the narrower Synoptic sense, are included, but it is easy to make too much of the Evangelist's insistence on the sacred number, seven. Signs seem to include more than miracles, properly speaking. His purpose is so to arrange these as to illustrate the growth of faith in Jesus and the development of unbelief. He sets the narrative before his readers that it may of itself suggest who and what Jesus is in His own person.

(4) *For what body of readers is the Gospel intended?* Who are the "ye" addressed in xx. 31? Tradition is unanimous in maintaining that the Gospel was intended for readers in Asia Minor, and that the seat of its origin is Ephesus. Everything seems to point to the fact that, in the main, readers

already Christian are those who are addressed. The kind of questions that are discussed are precisely those that would confront the Christian Church as it came in contact with unbelieving and critical Jewish and heathen thought. We may also conclude that those for whom the Gospel was written had not seen Christ in the flesh. It closes with a beatitude relative to those who "have not seen, and yet have believed" (xx. 29). The verse belongs to the Editor's work,¹ but it is, nevertheless, an interpretation of the purpose of the Gospel. The recipients belonged to the third generation of Christians at least. There would arise a great need, now that the eye-witnesses and immediate disciples of Jesus, and even those who had known them, were dying,—to have some means of establishing the faith that they had been taught on a sound basis of history. The Synoptic Gospels were not sufficient. They were directed to another class of readers, and grew up in another atmosphere. The Gospel is really an apology for Christianity of a very unique kind. One of the chief difficulties with which these readers would be met was the connection, although not quite in the modern sense, between the historical Jesus and the risen and living Christ, who had made Himself known to many of them in the power of His Spirit. Their particular difficulty was precisely the reverse of the modern antithesis—Jesus or Christ. They had no difficulty in believing in the supernatural. The Greek gods took earthly shape, and died and rose again. Was the Jesus who was put to death as a criminal really the same Jesus whose Spirit was at work in the Church? Was it possible to conceive that the Jesus whose earthly life is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels was the Saviour of the world? In them, the kind of people amongst whom He moved, and the kind of life that formed the background of the history, differed from anything known and experienced by a class of readers whose environment and largely their forms of thought were Hellenistic and not Palestinian.

Two things must be borne in mind :—

(a) We have to remember that **Paul** had lived and preached

¹ p. 59.

among them. His great central message of freedom from the law seemed inconsistent with the fact that Jesus, in his attitude and words, gave no indication that He regarded the law as a temporary and evanescent thing. He Himself obeyed it. Paul was chiefly interested in the Jesus who appeared to him on the Damascus road. He refused to preach a Christ "after the flesh," and had probably never seen Him in the flesh (2 Cor. v. 16). Paul also was enabled to run his conception of the death of Jesus into the moulds of Jewish sacrificial thought. It was an atoning and expiatory death. To Greek thought, sacrifice is not primarily expiatory, and in this it was in agreement with the most ancient ideas of sacrificial religion. To the Greek, it was a physical means of communion with the god. To the Hebrew, in whom the sense of sin and divine wrath was developed, sacrifice became largely expiatory.¹ The death of Jesus is presented in the Fourth Gospel in a form more intelligible to the Hellenic mind, as a means by which the Christian may enter into communion with God, and receive the Holy Spirit. When Jesus is "glorified," the Spirit is given.

Accordingly, men were asking for some account of the earthly life that would meet their present situation. It was not enough to give them collections of the deeds and sayings of Jesus. A bare narrative of the historical life would not do. They must have a kind of narrative that would make it possible for them to believe that the Jesus of Nazareth, and the Jesus whom they heard preached and knew in their hearts, were one and the same. Take, for example, the utterances about the Second Coming, and the fact that Jesus had not yet come; and the further fact that the earliest Church had lived in hourly expectation of His coming, as their records showed. Believers were dying, and He had not come. Can we wonder that the question of the future life pressed hard? Can we not understand why, in the closing discourses, which take the place of the eschatological utterances in the Fourth Gospel, so much is

¹ Cf. Schultz, *Old Testament Theology*, i. pp. 384 ff.; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 400 ff., New Edition.

said of His coming again, and of the Spirit, His *alter ego*? Why, also, reunion after death is spoken of with such tenderness? Moreover, these utterances about the Second Advent were more or less unintelligible to Hellenistic Jews, and to the world of thought in which they lived. It is remarkable that in this Gospel the term "kingdom of God" occurs only twice, in the Nicodemus story. Jesus only once refers to His "kingdom"—before Pilate. Its place is taken by the conception "eternal life."

(b) When the Fourth Gospel was written Christianity ran some risk of becoming a speculative system, especially where it came in contact with Greek thought, in Asia Minor. The clearest evidence of this tendency to separate the Christian religion from the historic Jesus is found in the prevalence of what are called **Docetic Ideas of His Person**. The general teaching was that of a "phantom" Jesus. The chief difficulty seems to have been connected with the suffering of Jesus. To the Jew it was a stumbling-block, for reasons that are obvious; a criminal could not be Messiah. To the Greek the Cross was "foolishness," a thing to be brushed aside as impossible and incredible in the case of a divine being.¹ It is noticeable that in the *Didache*, which may be regarded as giving a picture of normal church life towards the end of the first century, there is a complete absence of biographical interest in Jesus Christ, and no mention is made of His crucifixion.² One reason for mentioning Docetism at this point is that it cannot properly be regarded as a sect, or identified exclusively with any particular name like Cerinthus. It rather represented a tendency of thought which appears and reappears in the theology of many different schools. "The essential thing is that Jesus Christ was man only in appearance. Some, like the writer of the Acts of John,³ denied that Our Lord had any material existence;

¹ p. 33.

² Burkitt, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 272.

³ In the Acts of John it is stated that the real Christ appears to John on the Mount of Olives, and speaks thus: "John! Unto the multitude down below in Jerusalem I am being crucified and

He could be seen and heard, but the form and the voice differed on different occasions. Others were content to deny that He felt the pains of crucifixion ; others, like Marcion, denied His birth. But all were alike in this, that they regarded Jesus as having been in no sense a real human being."¹

This tendency to deny the true humanity of Jesus no doubt in some measure accounts for the fact that in the Synoptic Gospels also we have such a careful record of the human characteristics of Jesus. The emphasis both in the Fourth Gospel, and especially in the Johannine Epistles, on the reality of our Lord's humanity, is undoubtedly intended to meet such theories of His person. In the Gospel we are told that Jesus was *wearied* and *thirsty* (iv. 6, 7). He *wept* at the death of a friend (xi. 35). His suffering on the Cross was real ; John alone records the utterance, "I thirst" (xix. 28). In the Epistles we have such passages as 1 John i. 1-3, ii. 22, iv. 2 ff. ; 2 John 7.

John saw clearly that, unless historical reality was to be surrendered to religious speculation, the perplexities apparent in the minds of his hearers must be met, as to the relationship between the historic Jesus and the risen Christ. The perplexity represented a true instinct, and suggested the lines along which the Church must go if a disastrous compromise with the thought of the time was not to take place. The only hope for the Christian faith was to restore to it the assurance of the abiding significance of the earthly life of Jesus.² John's aim is so to interpret and arrange the facts about Jesus that these words and deeds themselves might be a "witness" to the person of Christ. These words and deeds had already passed through the crucible of his own personal experience, and had already, from his preaching of them, and reflection upon them, acquired the very character that was desired. There is an

pierced with lances and reeds, and gall and vinegar are given Me to drink ; but I put it into thine heart to come up unto this mountain, that thou mightest hear matters needful for a disciple to learn from his Master and for a man to learn from his God."

¹ Burkitt, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

² E. F. Scott, *FG*, p. 372.

undoubted heightening of effect, apparent in the Johannine narrative, but it is not deliberately or consciously brought about. It is the result of a development in the experience of the Apostle, the work, as he himself would have said, of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth (xvi. 13). At times, indeed, we feel that the history is very accurate, and must be the work of an eyewitness, but this must not be allowed to obscure from us the character of the Gospel as a whole.

In this connexion, we must clearly understand the mentality of the Jew. He was accustomed to the use of *Halachah*, which was an interpretation of the law, and *Haggadah*, which was a tale or a homily founded on portions of the sacred history. The Gospel of John may be regarded as *Haggadah*, a series of historical sermons. The form is analogous to the allegorising process which was employed in the Hellenistic age in connection with the stories of the Olympian gods.¹ This process of extracting the spiritual, as distinct from the bodily meaning of a narrative, is well illustrated in the work of the Alexandrian Philo. It does not mean that the history is sublimated. Philo allegorises the law, but insists on its being obeyed; he allegorises the narratives in Genesis, but does not cast doubt on their truth. Origen, in speaking of the interpretation of the four Gospels, says that their reception must depend on our recognising that their truth is not in the "bodily characters." He adds that the writers, under certain circumstances, preferred "the spiritual to the factual,"² the true spiritual being often preserved in the factual falsehood, as one may say."³

Origen's statement indicates that from a very early date the Gospel was thus interpreted as a "spiritual" Gospel, which is the epithet applied to it also by Clement of Alexandria. Both in narrative and in discourse, John deals with the words of Jesus and the events of His life, without any intention of misrepresenting actual historical fact. Occasionally even single sayings of Jesus are expressly interpreted (e.g. ii. 21 ;

¹ Murray, *FSGR*, p. 146.

² Literally "bodily."

³ *Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*, Ed. Brooke, i. p. 187; cf. Drummond, *CAFG*, pp. 28 ff.

xii. 33). The narrative and the teaching alike are but drapery, clothing the great figure of Jesus ; or, to change the metaphor, transparencies that reveal Him. The Jesus so revealed must necessarily be not only Jesus of Nazareth, but Jesus as alive after death, the Conqueror of death and sin. John is writing from the standpoint of the Resurrection as a *fait accompli*. Not a line of the New Testament has been written except by men who had this resurrection experience. Yet this Evangelist, far more than the others, reads back into the earthly life his own and the Church's subsequent experience. The Gospel is like an ellipse with two *foci*. One is the experience of the historical Jesus, the other of the risen Jesus, present in the hearts of men as the Holy Spirit. Around these centres an area is marked out, and within it moves the narrative and the teaching of the Evangelist. This Gospel is the supreme attempt to reconcile the Jesus of history with the subsequent faith of the Church regarding Him. It effectually prevented the beliefs of the Church from passing into mere philosophising, and fastened them for all time to the secure ground of historical fact.

CHAPTER III

THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE GOSPEL

AN attempt will be made in this chapter to analyse the atmosphere of religious and philosophical thought that prevailed in the Roman world, particularly in Asia Minor, about the time when the Fourth Gospel was published, 90-110 A.D.

Within the Roman Empire there existed a bewildering variety of religions and religious experience. The conquests of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) had produced an influx of religious ideas from all over the known world. India, Persia, Babylonia, Egypt, and Syria all sent their contributions. As time went on these tended to coalesce into one somewhat vague and inclusive religious movement. It was this movement of Asiatic-Greek thought which confronted the earliest Christian missionaries to the Gentile world. Vague and indefinable as it is, we must give it a name. Perhaps **Hellenism** is as good a name as any.

In the history of Greek religion the period which stretches from Plato to the time of the earlier Gnostics is usually called the Hellenistic period. Alexander and his successors, the Diadochi, proceeded deliberately to impose a system of Greek thought and life—"culture," to use a word unhallowed by modern usage—on the vanquished peoples. The attempt, however, only ended in failure, and the portion of the Hellenistic period which synchronises with the beginnings of the Christian era is, in this connexion, specially significant. By the time of Plato, the traditional beliefs in the ancient Olympian gods had crumbled away under the attacks of philosophers. These attacks were conducted on grounds of morality. The stories of these ancient gods no longer satisfied, and often shocked, the moral sense. Morality became largely an intellectual effort, and virtue became equivalent to knowledge.

The business of philosophy was to rid religion of superstitions. This also, like all purely rationalistic movements, was doomed to fail. Moreover, great social changes were taking place. The old free city-state (*polis*) of the Greeks had disintegrated under the pressure of a military monarchy, and not even the more tolerant rule of the Romans could preserve the rights and ideals of life for which the ancient *polis* stood.¹ Therewith, the old form of Greek social life passed away, and the boundaries of nationality were broken down. The spirit of society became cosmopolitan, as in like manner religion became what is called "syncretistic," a term used to denote the spirit of compromise which minimises theological differences.

We must, therefore, be prepared to find that the type of non-Christian and anti-Christian thought that is reflected in the pages of the Fourth Gospel—written as it was for Christians of Asia Minor—is something very different from the ceremonial Judaism of the Synoptic Gospels. It is this later Hellenism that forms the environment of the Gospel, against which it is a reaction. Our direct knowledge of this period is unfortunately very small. It has to be gathered widely from quotations preserved in later writers. There is no historian or philosopher of the period whose works are extant, save perhaps **Philo**. It is well to remember that Philo was one among many, in view of the somewhat exaggerated position that is usually accorded to him in connection with the Fourth Gospel. Philo has no monopoly even of the word *Logos*. As we shall see later, it is a word that belonged to the whole environment of the time. It would be rash to conclude that every writer who nowadays employs the term "evolution" has read the works of Darwin. And the fact that John speaks of the *Logos* is no proof that he has read Philo.

It is this later Hellenism, not strictly speaking a religion, but a blend of religions, that forms the pagan environment in which, and largely to meet which the Fourth Gospel was composed. Men had been driven, as by a movement of despair, back upon the elemental experiences and longings of their own souls. The movement has been very aptly likened by Mr

¹ Gilbert Murray, *FSGR*, p. 107.

Edwyn Bevan¹ to the undenominational or undogmatic religion of our own day, arising from the sense that behind articulate beliefs there must be some common religion, if only we can find it. The following passage is worthy of quotation:—

“For some reason or other men apparently had come to feel more keenly the inadequacy of a life limited by our bodily senses, to strain more and more in tedium or disgust, or in some craving for a larger life, away from this world to the unexplored beyond. Of course the feeling had always existed to some extent: the old Bacchic and Orphic sects centuries before had borne witness to it among the Greeks: but in the later world the feeling had become more general. This is one of those shiftings of mood which come in the lives of peoples as well as in that of individuals, hard to account for, except partially, hard often to grasp with any precision. A feeling came over men, and suddenly the familiar universe seemed a strange place, terrifying in its enormous magnitude—the earth stretching into regions of unexplored possibilities, moved and shaken by inhuman forces, and over all the silent enigma of the wheeling stars. They awoke, as it were, to find themselves lost in the streets of a huge strange city.”²

We may now make an attempt to isolate one or two of the principal currents of religious thought that are apparent in this “Hellenism,” of which we shall presently hear so much in connection with our study of the Gospel.

I. JUDAISM

In the midst of this welter of religious thought Judaism was, by its inherent nature and in accord with its past history, the most successful in preserving its identity. By the end of the first century A.D., the Jewish religion, for various reasons, was widespread throughout the Roman world.

¹ *SS*, p. 92.

² *Ib.* pp. 97-8.

Under Augustus the Jews formed seven per cent. of the population of the Empire. It is unnecessary to enter fully into all the causes that led to the **Diaspora**, as this scattering of the Jewish nation is called. Both by force, and by the compulsion of trade interests, more particularly after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Jewish nation and the Jewish religion were dispersed over the known world. Judaism had also become a missionary religion; perhaps rather proselytising than missionary.

Detached from the Temple worship at Jerusalem, the Jews had **synagogues** everywhere, which were centres of Jewish influence and thought, and of proselytising zeal. Vast numbers, mostly Asiatic Greeks, must have adopted the Jewish faith, whilst retaining their Greek forms of thought. The earliest preachers of the Christian Gospel found in these synagogue communities a starting-point for their message that the Messiah had come in Jesus. In this situation, and not in the more restricted area of controversy depicted in the Synoptic Gospels, is to be found the key to the strongly-marked Jewish controversial element in the Fourth Gospel. In this Gospel the Judaism portrayed belongs rather to the Synagogue than to the Temple, and it is constantly opposed in fierce polemic.

Side by side, however, with this polemical strain, there appears a strong sense that Judaism and Christianity are closely related. The writer is clearly a Jew of Palestine, and both his language and his thought are cast in a Hebraic mould. To him the great tragedy is that "Jesus came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

He built upon the position established by Paul, that all that was valuable and permanent in Judaism had passed over into Christianity. He distinguishes the "Israelite indeed" from those who reject the claims of Jesus, and whose defection he attributes to "guile" (i. 47). Nathanael is the type of those who find in Jesus the fulfilment of all their hopes. The Evangelist's controversy is with the Jew who clung tenaciously to the fact of his historical descent from Abraham, and had missed the meaning of the past history of the nation (viii. 39 ff.). "Before Abraham was, I am." "Abraham rejoiced to see my day."

Judaism itself, in the centuries before Christ came, had already been influenced largely by the religions of Persia and of Greece. It retained its strong monotheism, and in one form or another the belief in the coming of a Great Deliverer, the Messiah. Also, the Jews of the Diaspora were bereft of the unifying influence of the sacrificial system which centred in the Temple at Jerusalem, and this tended to lay them more open to Hellenistic influences.

The echoes of **conflict with the Jews** are heard everywhere in the Fourth Gospel. We feel instinctively that "the Jews," so frequently spoken of, mean for the Evangelist not merely Jews of Palestine, but stand for that great body of organised opposition to the claims of Christ, which was fully represented in the Hellenistic Judaism of the Dispersion, when it came in contact with the Christian preaching. The emphasis that is laid on the coming of the Greeks in xii. 20, as an occasion on which Jesus speaks of the world-wide significance of His death (*vv.* 31, 32), is an indication of the importance which the Evangelist attached to such an historical incident in the controversy with the Jews of Asia Minor. He is never so true to his method of writing as in the accounts he gives of these Jewish controversies. He takes actual points such as the Sabbath, or the question of descent from Abraham, that must have emerged in the actual ministry of Jesus, and so treats them as to make the issue intelligible to his readers.

The points discussed, however, in these controversies, always pass over into such questions as the equality of Jesus with God (*v.* 18 ff.). Such questions could only arise at a later stage of Christian thought, when it had become more reflective and dogmatic, and especially when it came into violent contact with Jewish monotheism. Here we have an indication of the Evangelist's constant habit of thought. He superimposes upon, and transmutes the actual history so as to adapt its message to his own time.

It must not, however, be forgotten that at every Passover thousands of Greek-speaking Jews would make their appearance in Jerusalem, and that many of them were domiciled there, as the

presence of their synagogues shows (Acts vi. 9). The fact, therefore, that Jesus is represented as engaged in controversy with Hellenist Jews in Jerusalem cannot be regarded as, in itself, a breach of historical probability. A letter of Herod Agrippa to Caligula is quoted by Philo (*de Legat.* ii. 587). "Jerusalem is the capital not of a single country, but of most, because of its colonies in Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria in general, and Hollow Syria, as also in Pamphylia, Cilicia, most districts of Asia, as far as Bithynia, and the outlying parts of Pontus."

At the same time, it is undoubted that the Judaism of the Gospel is the Judaism of a later age. Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* (A.D. 150-160)—a defence of Christianity against Judaism and purporting to be the result of a two days' discussion—deals with such subjects as: the obscure origin of Jesus (viii., *cf.* John vii. 27); His birthplace (cviii., *cf.* John vii. 41 f.); Sabbath observance (xxiii., xxvi. f., xlvii., etc., *cf.* John viii. 10 f.; vii. 19 f.); the coming of Elijah (xlix. f., *cf.* John i. 2); Jews and Samaritans (lxxviii., *cf.* John iv. 1 ff.; viii. 5).¹ Similar subjects, as will be apparent, are discussed in the Gospel. They indicate contemporary controversy on such topics as would naturally suggest themselves to the mind of a Hellenist Jew, as objections to Christianity; "He makes Himself equal with God"; "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"; "Art Thou greater than our father Jacob?" The Eucharistic discussion in vi. 32-59 reflects the thought of a later age, when a somewhat materialistic doctrine of the Supper threatened to invade the Christian Church and had become a matter of attack on the part of the strict Jews. Again, why should such prominence be given to **Judas** in this Gospel? The circumstance that Judas, one of the twelve, betrayed Jesus, might well be a fruitful source of misrepresentation among enemies and perplexity among friends of the Christian preachers. How could Jesus ever have chosen him? The difficulty is met by saying that Judas acted under a direct impulse from Satan (xiii. 2), and by the theory that Jesus

¹ *Cf.* Moffatt, *LNT*, p. 562.

foreknew and even permitted the betrayal (vi. 64 ; xiii. 2, 11, 27).¹

II. STOICISM

As a philosophical system, Stoicism recognises as its founder Zeno (342-270 B.C.), a native of Crete. It passed through several clearly-marked stages, but for our purpose we need only deal with it as it emerged in the Roman period, when the system had gained a firm hold on cultured Roman thought. For our knowledge of the Stoic thought of this period we are chiefly indebted to the writings of Epictetus, Seneca, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. This period covers a time, roughly speaking, from the birth of Christ to the death of Aurelius in A.D. 180.

It is well known that Paul shows a certain familiarity with the Stoic thought of this period. His fundamental conceptions, however, are different, and it is easy to be misled by parallelisms which, when examined in their contexts, either disappear altogether, or resolve themselves into examples of the way in which Stoic expressions had taken root in the popular mind, for which Paul wrote.² It is from the hymn of Cleanthes the, Stoic, that Paul quotes in Acts xvii. 28 the words, "We also are his offspring." Tarsus itself was a centre of Stoic teaching from about 200 B.C. By the time of Paul, Stoicism had become distinctly eclectic, and had incorporated ideas derived from Epicurus, the Pythagoreans, and certain Eastern philosophies. In other words, it was mingling with the great Hellenistic stream.

It ought to be distinctly understood at the outset, that, when we speak of Stoicism as a part of the environment of the Fourth

¹ Cf. E. F. Scott, *FG*, p. 72. Not merely the shame of the Cross itself, but the circumstances that accompanied it, were a "scandal" to the Jew.

² See Lightfoot, *S. Paul and Seneca*, in his "Philippians," pp. 270 ff.

Gospel, it is not assumed that the Evangelist has in view any academic system. Academic systems of thought, at least those that are as tenacious of life as Stoicism, gradually permeate into the regions of popular thought, and ordinary men begin to talk and to think more or less unconsciously in terms of them. It is in this sense that the Gospel may be said to be influenced by Stoic thought. Indeed, Stoicism had long passed out of the hands of the academic philosopher. The Stoics had come to be known as missionary preachers of morality. They developed an order of wandering preachers, of whom mention has already been made (p. 5). It is notable how concrete and popular are the illustrations that are used by Epictetus in his writing. The tone of the Stoic teaching is markedly didactic and hortatory. Moral earnestness characterised the teaching from the first, being, as it was and continued to be, a deep and sincere reaction against the corruption and the profligacy of the times.

We have space only to direct the attention to one or two of the main points in the Stoic system.

I. The Doctrine of the Ideal "Wise Man"

Stoicism is, as has often been said, the offspring of despair. Faced with the great facts of moral evil, pain, and death; denizens of a world where blind destiny seemed to rule, and human freedom was checked and frustrated at every point, men had come to believe that **Fate** or **Fortune** alone held sway. The causes were partly political and partly physical. Earthquake and pestilence, the constant arbitrament of arms, despotic rule, brought great insecurity and disquiet to the individual life.¹ The Greek was confronted with the same problem as the Hebrew in his days of misfortune and exile. The wicked prosper and the good are oppressed. The resultant mood of pessimism is ultimately common to them both. "The wise man's eyes are in his head, and the fool walketh in dark-

¹ Cf. Bevan, SS, pp. 25 f.

ness : and yet I perceived that one event happeneth to them all " (Eccles. i. 14).¹

It was the business of the Stoic to discover, and to reduce to rule, some mode of living and attitude of mind, that would make life not only bearable, but efficient under such conditions. He gradually evolved his doctrine of the ideal " wise man," the perfect human character. Some means must be found of protecting the *soul*, at least, against the disturbing and hostile influences of life.

The parallel between the Stoic and the Hebrew in his reaction upon the problem of pain and evil, is closer than at first sight appears. Yet the answer they both give is an answer of faith. Both are in a sense great believers. Scepticism is foreign to their nature. Both have faith in the divine government. The Hebrew " wise man " achieved his purpose of steadfastness in the midst of it all by a passionate belief in the " judgment " or " righteousness " of Jehovah, by a sense of personal security in the hand of God, and by a fervent hope in the restoration and readjustment of all things in the Messianic age. " Fear God, and keep His commandments " ; " I know that my Redeemer liveth " ; " When Messias cometh, He will tell us all things." The Stoic, on the other hand, found rest in the conception that God and Nature are one. A unity of purpose runs through the whole of nature, a world-soul, the **Logos**. The Universe, taken in its entirety, is perfect, and there is really no such thing as evil in it. What the Stoic seems to mean is that the " world-course " does not proceed capriciously or at random. It is like the uncoiling of a rope, and no fortuitous concourse of atoms, as the Epicurean held.

Strangely enough, the Stoic has another name for this uniformity of nature. He calls it *Pronoia* or " Providence." It is quite clear

¹ On the question whether Ecclesiastes shows traces of Greek philosophy, see Plumptre's edition (*Camb. Bible*), pp. 30 ff. ; Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, pp. 260 ff. But the scepticism of Ecclesiastes is ethical rather than religious. God may be far away, and occupy a moral neutrality ; but He exists and is powerful. The idea that " God is in heaven and thou upon earth " is not Hellenic.

that, logically, the position is inconsistent, and the Stoic practically admits it when he allows that God Himself is under the sway of fate or destiny.¹ The inconsistency, however, is really due to a lack of interest in philosophical speculation for its own sake, a lack which the Stoic shared with the Hebrew. It was due, on the one hand, to the ultimately prophetic and dogmatic character of the Stoic thought, and to a practical desire to rescue the idea of the uniformity of nature from becoming identified with blind physical causation; on the other hand, to a repugnance "to dissolve God into an abstract idea. It was the crude expression of an intense conviction that God is real."² Yet the fact remains that behind the throne of Zeus stands Fate. In Hebrew thought, God's will is sovereign, and ultimately what happens in the world or in human experience is predestined by Him. For the Hebrew, the problem is not connected with the Divine Freedom, but with the human. The Hebrew knows nothing of natural law in our sense. All that happens is the result of either a direct act or an arrangement of God.

We are, however, concerned here only with the Stoic endeavour to make life not merely bearable but efficient under such conditions. The remedy is **apathy**. Our word "apathy" fails to preserve the nobility of the Greek equivalent. The conception reaches a certain grandeur and does not completely degenerate into selfish aloofness. The ideal man must learn to set himself in a position of complete and lofty detachment from the world's unrest and suffering, and even from the disturbing tyranny of human affections. Pain and evil are unrealities. It follows that it is not these, but our notion (*dogma*) of them that has any reality. We may illustrate by two well-known passages from Epictetus:—

"If you love an earthen jar, say, it is an earthen jar that I love; for, when it is broken, you will not be disturbed: if you kiss your little child or your wife, say that it is a human being whom you are kissing, for, when either of them dies, you will not be disturbed." (*Handbook*, 3.)

¹ "*Irrevocabilis humana pariter ac divina cursus vehit*" (Seneca, *de Prov.* v. 6).

² Bevan, *SS*, p. 41.

"When you see anyone weeping, in sorrow because his child is away from home, or has died, or because he has lost his possessions, take care that the impression of what you see does not carry you away, as though the man himself were involved in evils that come from without. Rather at once draw a distinction in your own mind and let it be natural to you to say, 'It is not what has happened that distresses this man (for it does not distress another), but his notion of what has happened.' At the same time, so far as speaking is concerned, do not hesitate to go along with him, and even if it so happen, to groan with him. Take care, however, that the groan does not come from within." (*Ibid.* 16; cf. *Dissertations*, i. 18.)

The Stoic held that this *apathy* is "in our power," and is the primary secret of ideal human existence. "Things themselves have no natural power to form our judgments."¹ On what, then, is this judgment of things based? It is based on Reason (*logos*), not in the sense of a logical deduction from premises, or induction from particular facts. Reason is the *Logos*. Each human soul is essentially a part of the world-soul, and life according to the great all-embracing purpose in the world-soul, *i.e.* according to nature, means the power to distinguish those things that are in our power from those that are not. Epictetus would have said that the life of wife or child, or the coming of death or misfortune, or loss of property are "not in our power," and therefore ought to be as things "indifferent." An attitude of detachment towards these is therefore necessary. The things in our power are our own wills, and the formation of judgments and opinions. All else is to be surrendered to God.²

It must not be supposed, however, that the Stoic *apathy* meant complete selfishness, as the second quotation from Epictetus indicates. No system of ancient thought did more to promote the brotherhood of man. They held that the individual life is not meant to be an isolated unit, but the life of a citizen of the great city, which is the whole world. We are to do everything possible for the good of our fellows. We

¹ M. Aurel, *Med.*, vi. 52.

² *Diss.* iv. 4.

are to practise philanthropy, even to the point of incurring physical pain, or death itself, for our brethren. Yet we ought to preserve a complete indifference as to whether we succeed or fail. A man must not "concern" himself with his fellows, in the sense that he allows their suffering to disturb his equanimity. Pity to the Stoic is actually a vice.¹ The ideal sage must practise "independence," and should be master of his own fate.²

The Stoic teaching always made its final appeal to the ideal human character as exemplified in the lives of notable men like Socrates and Alexander. Of course it had to idealise them for its purpose. The catholicity of Epictetus is remarkable when he idealises Diogenes the Cynic, and holds him up as an example of virtue to be imitated.³ The Stoic also demanded a very strict consistency of creed and practice in his teachers. It is, therefore, to be expected that, to minds held by such an ideal, the religion of Christ, whose central Figure was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," who "carried men's sicknesses, and bare their infirmities," would fail to appeal. Stoicism and Christianity would join issue, not so much as rival systems of philosophic thought, but as holding contradictory ideals of what a perfect human character ought to be. To become the "servant of all" was repugnant to the Stoic.⁴ In this connection certain touches in the portrait of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are significant. Gethsemane, to

¹ *E.g.* "Pity" is classed with envy in Epictet., *Diss.* iv. 1, as a moral defect.

² *Cf.* Bevan, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-6; Davidson, *Stoic Creed*, pp. 188 ff. The Stoic scheme of thought cannot ultimately be acquitted of a selfish and impersonal aloofness. The Stoic taught by means of examples, and his models are the great ones of the earth, like Hercules and Alexander and the Emperors. His philanthropy required a sense of power, underlying it, and is the direct opposite of Luke xxii. 25 f.

³ *Diss.*, III. xxii. 6; xxix. 4.

⁴ Note the magnificent "self-sufficiency" of John xiii. 1 ff., and the scene following which describes the lowly service of Jesus, as its natural result.

the Stoic, would represent a moral breakdown, and John omits the scene altogether, preserving however the words that were uttered (xii. 27). The sense of frustration and disappointment that appears in the consciousness of Jesus in the Synoptics is strangely absent in this Gospel. To the Stoic it would be an insuperable barrier to belief in Jesus, indicating a fatal lack of "self-sufficiency." It is noticeable that what has been called the "self-possession" of Jesus in this Gospel appears side by side with a complete subordination of His own will to the will of God (x. 18). It is extremely probable that these touches are intended to provide, in the true spirit of the missionary preacher, a real point of contact with contemporary ideals of life. "Who is this Jesus of yours," the stoically-minded controversialist might say, "who claims to be the perfect revelation of God, and the highest ideal of human character? Was He not disturbed and disquieted by real moral temptation? Was He not moved with compassion and pity when He saw the multitude, or looked on a leper? Was not His soul troubled in Gethsemane, and His sweat as it were great drops of blood? What do you mean by making the very centre of your religion a man on a cross, the emblem of a shameful end, who suffered thereon agonies of mind and body?"¹ Paul meant something very real when he said that the Cross was to the Greek, "foolishness," in other words, "a matter of ridicule." The "foolish" man, as distinct from the "wise" man, was he who allowed himself to be inwardly disturbed by evil, pain, or death. The wise man should not dread death. He may, indeed, take his own life, for the sake of friends, or fatherland, or if he is suffering from an incurable disease. God sometimes gives men the signal for retreat, and "opens the door, and says to you, Go." Suicide, "the way out," must not, however, be

¹ The reserve practised in all the Gospels regarding the physical suffering of Jesus on the Cross is remarkable, but there is a similar reticence in the Fourth Gospel regarding His mental suffering. He speaks "in a loud voice," *i.e.* without sign of physical exhaustion, and the great cry of desertion is omitted. The reality of his physical suffering is, however, asserted in the words "I thirst."

practised thoughtlessly, or in an aggrieved or cowardly mood. "The cabin smokes—so I take leave of it. Why make ado?"¹ The Stoic believed in dying for men on occasion, or in putting an end to his own life, but it must be done calmly and majestically.² When a man suffers sickness or death he must sicken and die "as becomes a god."

If we realise that it was in some such atmosphere as this that the Fourth Gospel was written, a flood of light is thrown on many of its scenes and utterances. Certain traits in the character of Jesus selected for emphasis are significant. He is so far impervious to the authority and influence of human affection that He refuses to allow it to determine or to deflect Him from His course (ii. 4; vii. 3 ff.; xi. 3-7). He is obedient in all things to the will of God, and on occasion, even the pressing claims of natural hunger are suppressed (iv. 31-34). There is no reason to think that in these descriptions the Evangelist has allowed himself to be unduly influenced by the Stoic ideas with which he is confronted. He is fundamentally true to the consciousness of Jesus, and speaks in the true spirit of the Christian missionary, who seeks to emphasise those conceptions that are common to the thought of the evangeliser and the evangelised. This, however, does not exclude the possibility of criticism of the Stoic "apathy," so far as it had found root in contemporary popular thought. Jesus was "troubled in spirit"³ (xii. 27; xiii. 21) at the imminence of the Cross. At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus is said to be moved "in His spirit," and once, by a curious turn of phrase, is said to "trouble

¹ M. Aurel, *Med.* v. 29.

² M. Aurel, *Med.* viii. 47; cf. Bevan, *SS*, p. 70.

³ The use of *ταράσσω* would seem to imply an Epicurean, rather than a Stoic outlook. *ἀταραξία* corresponded in the Epicurean system to the Stoic *ἀπάθεια*. Both sought the conditions, the one of happiness, and the other of virtue, in inward calm. Stoicism had, however, by this time become eclectic, and did not hesitate to borrow from or even to idealise the thinkers of other systems. The use of *ταράσσω* would only indicate that the Evangelist is writing for popular thought.

Himself " (xi. 33). Whether this phrase is a somewhat clumsy attempt to combine the ideas of stoical " self-possession " and sensitiveness to human sorrow, it is difficult to determine. Jesus is also said to " weep " (xi. 33 f.), and emphasis is laid on the fact that the emotion is due to " love " (xi. 3, 5, 36). The cure for human disturbance and fear in the presence of death is faith in God and in Jesus (xiv. 1, 27). A moving tenderness and pity breathes all through the closing discourses in chaps. xiv.-xvi., where Jesus takes farewell of His sorrowing disciples.

The purpose is evidently to commend the portrait of Jesus, not only to those who were influenced by Stoic forms of thought, but also to those who found it vain to suppress the spontaneous outburst of human emotion and passion. The cultured Stoic subdued these fountains of inward disturbance by walling them over. The ordinary man found them welling up in his heart, and having drunk of them, he thirsted still. Jesus, however, had emotions and passions like our own, and also a great inward **Peace**, which it was in His power to convey as His last legacy to men. That peace was a gift that could not be appropriated without receiving the Giver also. It " shall be in him, a well of water, springing up into everlasting life," words that wonderfully recognise that the human heart can never become a frozen lake. There is a marvellous blending of divine majesty and actual experience of human weakness in the portrait of Jesus. Jesus, moved as He is by the final treachery of Judas, yet shows His control of Himself and of the situation by actually challenging and permitting the traitor to do the deed (xiii. 27). While cherishing in His heart the most intense human sorrow at Bethany, He yet preserves a lofty calm and assurance. He brings to His disciples " peace," not " apathy " (xiv. 27 ; xx. 19). It is peace, the fruit of victory, brought by One who has conquered pain, sin, and death. " Peace " was the common daily salutation, which in the mouths of wayfaring men had lost much of its original assumption of lurking danger. Jesus refills the word with content, and in so doing recognised what the Stoic had failed to recognise, the need for satisfying the deepest instincts of the human heart, and the deep need for

deliverance from spiritual fear. "Truth" or "reality" does not exclude pain and sin and death. They are enemies of human life, but vanquished. Those who understand the "truth," which is Jesus Himself, have entered into the glorious freedom of the sons of God. They *know* the Truth, and the Truth has made them free (viii. 32).

II. The Doctrine of God and Man

(1) Men as "sons" of God.

The Stoic has no other conception of God than as immanent. Zeno, following Heraclitus, identifies the reality that underlies the sensible world as a kind of semi-material mind-stuff, which is in its substance fire. All around the world is an envelope of fiery ether, which is pure and unmixed. In air, water, earth, the elemental fire or *logos* is found, but in a grosser form. It is the soul of everything, and exists in everything. In the souls of men, however, the divine fire remains in its purity. These are sparks of the divine fire. The doctrine of Zeno that men are not only kindred, but consubstantial with God, makes itself felt all through the later Stoic teaching. Men are called "sons of God."¹ In each man there is a "dæmon" or "genius" given him by Zeus to direct his life, a word of which "conscience" is an entirely inadequate rendering. The Stoic had another word for "conscience,"² which is the term for the individual's insight into the nature of things, and by which he is guided.

This Stoic conception of the kinship of man with God seems to make itself felt in the thought of the Fourth Gospel. The Stoics held that there was no real barrier to unfettered communion with God, save moral and intellectual blindness. "Live with the gods," says Marcus Aurelius, "and he does live with the gods who constantly shows to them that his own soul is satisfied with that which is assigned to him, and that it does

¹ Epictetus, I. ix. 1; Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* x. 26. "Every man's intelligence is a god, and an efflux of the deity."

² *συνείδησις*.

all that the 'dæmon' wishes, which Zeus hath given to every man for his guardian and guide, a portion of Himself. And this is every man's understanding and reason."¹ Here the Fourth Evangelist is implicitly antagonistic. Jesus alone is "the Son of God." Men may become "children of God," only through the power that Jesus confers (John i. 12; cf. 2 Pet. i. 4). The consistency with which John employs the distinction between "son"² and "child"³ can only be intended to emphasise the freedom of God in giving, and of men in receiving the gift of salvation or sonship through Christ; also to keep inviolate the person of Jesus as distinct from ordinary humanity. Jesus alone is the *Logos* in nature and in action. To the Stoic, sonship is an act of will, the deliberate acceptance by the enlightened man of a relationship that already exists. In John, men become "children of God" by a process of regeneration, through the Spirit (iii. 5 ff.). They are begotten "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (i. 13).

It would be rash to say that the rather bewildering, semi-materialistic conception of the *Logos*, so evident in the Stoic position, is entirely absent in Johannine thought. "Life" does seem to belong to a semi-physical class of ideas. The child of God has within him a divine "seed" (1 John iii. 9), which keeps him from sin. At the same time we must not think that, if this be so, some strange and startling thing has happened in the New Testament. This conception of "life" as a kind of higher vital essence has been attributed to a combination of Hebrew and Greek ideas.⁴ It may be questioned whether any contribution was needed from the Hellenic side. If we penetrate behind the religious conception of "life" or "spirit" in Hebrew thought, we find that it is never wholly emancipated from the semi-physical conception with which it started (e.g. Gen. ii. 7). It appears in Paul, as for instance when he says that God "shall quicken your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11). The "body of glory" is of a different substance from that which constitutes the

¹ *Med.* v. 27.

² υἱός.

³ τέκνον.

⁴ E. F. Scott, *FG*, pp. 258 ff.

earthly body, but it is a substance still (1 Cor. xv. 38 ff.). The Johannine language suggests that Jesus mediates to men the same relationship that He Himself possesses with God. It does not naturally belong to men. He makes men free from the bondage of sin (viii. 32, 34, 36). The condition is that men abide in His "word" (*logos*, viii. 31). Jesus is said to give to His disciples the "word" (*logos*) of God (xvii. 14). Only in this sense can Christians be said to have the "word of God" abiding in them (1 John i. 10; ii. 14). Those who reject Jesus Christ have not the "word of God" abiding in them (*cf.* viii. 37; xiv. 24).¹

(2) The Demon World.

Another set of ideas influenced the later Stoicism. Mainly through Chaldean and Babylonian influences, the science of **Astrology** became an integral part of Hellenistic thought. Not only the human soul, but the heavenly bodies themselves are fragments detached from the cosmic fire. They are made of very pure fire, and stand specially near to God. The sun, moon, and stars as they gleamed and burned in the sky, were also divinities and living souls. Thus the old gods returned from their banishment by Plato and the earlier Stoics, and brought with them many other spirits. The very names we give now to the stars and the planets are proof of the ancient fact. Moreover, the number of the gods was always increasing. There were many self-acting subordinate divinities, with whom men had to reckon. Men also were constantly being turned into gods; for according to the later eschatology, as we shall see in the next section, purified human souls were finding their way up through the spheres, until they reached the blissful region of the pure stars. The universe hangs together, and there must be a natural connection between the movements of the heavenly bodies and the sufferings and destinies of men. Men's ignorance and perplexity regarding tides and earthquakes, birth and death, the whole range of human destiny, could only result in the despairing belief that they were in the grasp of

¹ It is remarkable that John only once uses the plural of *λόγος* in the Gospel (x. 19); *ρήματα* is used instead. It is as though he wished to avoid the term *λόγοι* in face of the Stoic view that men are *λόγοι σπερματικοί*.

inscrutable power; not merely an impersonal fate, but a pantheon of divinities, whose friendliness was at least doubtful.

Even Judaism itself, during the inter-testamental period, and also during the Exile, took over a certain number of Persian and Babylonian astrological beliefs, and it was certainly influenced by them even earlier. Jeremiah protests in the name of Jehovah, against the offering of cakes and incense to the "queen of heaven" by the inhabitants of Jerusalem (vii. 18; xlv. 17). The doctrine of angels, who might be good or bad, was elaborated in later Judaism, and when it came in contact with Græco-Roman thought there was nothing strange to it in the doctrine of innumerable demonic influences surrounding the lives of men. Says one unknown ancient poet, "The air is so crowded with them that there is not one empty chink into which you could push the spike of a blade of grass corn."¹ Some held that they were not gods but intermediate spirits, "carriers between human and heavenly, hence of prayers, thence of gifts," as Apuleius expresses it.² At all events, if not gods, they were spirits, with power to work harm or good, who resented slights or inattentions to themselves, and must be propitiated. They were either "haters" or "lovers" of men, divine beings with human passions. Thus the ancient fears returned, and men felt themselves after all subject to spiritual powers which, through their very ignorance of them, seemed for the most part to be hostile or at least careless. The teaching of the earlier Stoics that all was under the control of *Logos*, and that all was ordered for the best, lost its power. The natural protest had begun against the idea that pain and evil were unrealities, and could be overcome by the sheer will to live.

The presence of the demon-world is recognised not only in the Gospels, especially in the miracles of healing, but in the thought of Paul. The existence of demons (the rulers of this world, 1 Cor. ii. 8; Rom. viii. 39) is not denied, but their power is neutralised and overcome by Jesus. The

¹ Quoted, Gilbert Murray, *FSGR*, p. 48.

² T. R. Glover, *Conflict of Religions*, p. 232.

personnel of the demon-world is strangely absent in the Fourth Gospel. The phrase, "thou hast a devil," occurs in vii. 20; viii. 48; x. 20 f. Satan is the protagonist of evil, and is spoken of as the "Prince of this world," who enters into Judas (xiii. 27) and is cast out when the Son of Man is crucified, or lifted up (xii. 31; cf. xiv. 30). The pre-eminence of Satan is also recognised in Eph. ii. 2 ("the prince of the power of the air"). While, therefore, in John there is this tendency to return to the earlier Jewish view of a single power of evil, it would seem that in the Prologue there is contained an implicit antagonistic reference to the problem of evil, as it was stated according to the metaphysical conceptions of the later Hellenistic period. What has been called incipient Gnosticism in the Gospel is really an outlook upon the growing Hellenistic tendency to personify the forces of nature, and to regard them as having a determining influence upon the fortunes of men. The words of John i. 3 (reading, *all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything that was made*) reaffirm the Jewish point of view regarding creation, and implicitly deny that any of the forces of nature are outside the sovereign activity of the Logos. The "world" (*kosmos*) in i. 10 means the universe. The "world" did not know the Logos. Here again the thought is parallel with the idea of the "heavenly man" in 1 Cor. ii. 7 ff. who descends from heaven through all the intermediate spheres. The "rulers of this world," the demonic powers, let him pass, because they did not recognise Him as the Lord of glory. They worked their will upon Him on earth, and crucified Him. John speaks of the "Son of Man who came down from heaven," but, as we have seen, hardly speaks of these intermediate demonic beings. He sweeps them aside without naming them, as Paul does, but with the same kind of challenge, "Who shall separate us?" (Rom. viii. 31 ff.). His challenge, however, is not a passionate outburst, but a calm delineation of the majesty of Jesus upon earth, and especially of the crowning glory of the Cross.¹ The Cross is the victorious struggle with the Prince of evil, the ruler of them all (John xii. 31 f.).

¹ Cf. Col. ii. 15.

(3) Moral and Spiritual Freedom.

Stoicism, like Christianity, recognises that a certain ethical standard is demanded by the relationship in which men stand as sons of God. Among the later Stoics, and especially in Epictetus, moral wrongdoing is regarded as disloyalty to an unseen Master, who knows our thoughts, and whose eye is upon us. "So live among men," says Seneca, "as if the eye of God were upon you" (*Ep.* x.). He also speaks of "a holy spirit residing in us, the guardian and observer of our good and evil deeds" (*Ep.* xli.). These apparently striking parallelisms with Christianity largely disappear when they are tested by the conception of moral freedom in the two systems of thought. Stoic thought is still conditioned, and the notion of freedom largely neutralised, by the persistence of the distinction between things that are and things that are not, "in our power." It is far from the thought of "the glorious liberty of the children of God." In the Johannine writings, the emphasis on the freedom which attaches, in all its manifestations, to the Christian life is a strong contrast. The most striking expression of it is given in viii. 34-36. It is very apparent that the freedom there spoken of has strong affinities with the thought of St Paul in Rom. vi. 16-23.

In particular, we may compare the extraordinary freedom in **Prayer** which is the prerogative of the Christian (xiv. 13, 14 ; xv. 7, 16 ; xvi. 23). The striking statements in the Fourth Gospel, where it is said that there are really no bounds to our freedom in asking, and to the possibilities of prayer, have greatly enriched the Christian conception. Perhaps they may be regarded as standing in conscious opposition to the ideas of prayer propagated by the Stoic preachers. The Stoic conception is full of nobility, but the stress is laid on asking for freedom from desire. Prayer for the satisfaction of the desire itself is discouraged. "The gods," says Marcus Aurelius, "either have power, or they have not. If they have not, why pray at all? If they have, why not pray for deliverance from the fear, or the desire, or the pain which the thing causes, rather than for the withholding or the giving of the particular

thing? Assuredly, if they can help men at all, this is the way of help. But perhaps you will say, 'The gods have put all that in my own power.' Then, is it not better to exercise your power and remain free, rather than to be set on what is not in your own power, and become a slave and a cringer? And who told you that the gods do not assist us even to what is in our own power? Begin there with your prayers, and you will see. Instead of 'Rid me of my enemy!' pray you against desire for the riddance. Instead of 'Spare my little one!' pray you that your fears may be at rest. Be this the direction of your prayers, and watch what comes." ¹

In the Fourth Gospel the Christian conception of absolute freedom in prayer is guarded from confusion by the qualification that all prayer must be "in the name of" Jesus. Complete freedom in prayer must be asserted, in view of the perfect relationship with God, and inasmuch as it is a personal relationship. The things we ask for, however, are determined by our characters, and the nobility of our interests. In other words, our prayers are determined by our environment, and by our response to it. There are some environments and preoccupations that are hostile to Christian prayer. They are incompatible with being "in Christ" or with prayer "in the name" of Christ. At the same time, we are taught to pray by praying. Even the right of experiment in prayer and the consequent personal discipline that ensues, must be asserted if the freedom of the children of God is to be preserved.² That is why some prayer seems to be unanswered. If the doctrine of freedom in prayer is dangerous, the danger is shared by all great doctrines. Granted that the quotation from Marcus

¹ I have quoted from the translation given by Professor Davidson (*SC*, p. 234). See also (*ib.* p. 235 f.) an excellent translation of Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* by Mr Watt.

² Dr John Brown is recorded once to have heard Dr Candlish preach in Edinburgh on prayer. His comment was as follows: "It was splendid; he first made you feel that you could ask for anything, a five-pound note, and then he dared you to have any overmastering wish but, 'Thy will be done'" (*Letters*, li.).

Aurelius represents fairly the Stoic doctrine of prayer, noble and instructive as it is, there is a great deal of modern Stoicism from which deliverance is needed.

Something may be said here in regard to the Johannine doctrine of **Sin**, a question that naturally arises in connection with moral freedom.

It has been contended that, in the Johannine writings, "sin is conceived not as a positive principle, but as a privation, a limitation. To the mind of John, sin in itself involves no moral culpability. . . . Sin in itself is a mere privation, and only assumes the darker character when the freedom offered through Christ is refused." "Man by nature is," according to the Johannine conception, "shut out from the true life, and is incapable of the higher knowledge and activity. Like the dwellers in Plato's cave (and the analogy, in view of John's relation to Greek thought, is more than accidental), he remains in a world of illusion until he is set free, and born from above into the true world of light. Moral ideas do not, at least primarily, have any part in the conception" (E. F. Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-21). If this account of the Johannine doctrine of sin is accepted, it involves a most serious compromise with Hellenistic thought on the subject of moral evil. Stoicism taught that vice was simply the result of ignorance or evil environment, and sprang from disordered or uncontrolled passions (Epict., *Diss.* iv. 1). Reason, on this view, was like a charioteer who either controlled or was controlled by the irrational or passionate element in human nature. Passions must in the end be crushed and not merely controlled. Stoicism began by denying the Platonic dualism, expressed in the doctrine that the body is the tomb of the soul. In its later stages it was compelled to accept its readmission, and revoke its former teaching of the identity of body and soul. "Thou art a little soul, bearing about a corpse, as Epictetus used to say" (Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* iv. 41). The soul, being of immortal nature, longed for deliverance from the body. Sin, therefore, is really due to the environment of the body. Moral culpability consists in ignorance and weakness, rather than in an offence against God. The Johannine view of sin cannot fairly be regarded as having anything at all in common with teaching of this kind.

The Johannine view of sin has much in common with the Pauline view. In the teaching of Paul, the "flesh" is not only

the substance of the body, but is a synonym for the earthly life, human nature untouched by grace. The flesh is the seat of sin, but the life in the flesh may be lived "in the faith of the Son of God." It harbours a power of evil, which does not, properly speaking, make itself felt as a "law" (in our sense of natural law), but rather as an authority, to which consent is given. The question of sin is one of conflicting loyalties. In redemption a man passes from the service of sin to the service of God. "Henceforth I call you not slaves . . . but . . . friends" (John xv. 15). For Paul, the authority of sin is shattered in the Cross of Christ (Rom. vi. 16 ff.). The authority of Christ over the sinner is based not only on his acceptance of the fact that sin is condemned in the flesh, but on the constraint exercised upon his heart by the love of Christ, "who loved me and gave Himself for me." Paul is developing his doctrine in opposition to antinomianism. John develops his in opposition to the Hellenic doctrine that sin is just ignorance, or due to the physical influence of the body, which accounts for the apparent absence of certain features in it that are prominent in Paul. Sin, John contends, is not ignorance, but distrust, and refusal of loyalty, obedience, and love to Jesus Christ. Jesus is the supreme revelation or "Exegete" of God's nature and purpose.¹ That is why sin in the Fourth Gospel appears so exclusively as want of faith in Jesus Christ. There is no lack of passages in the Gospel that indicate his sense that sin is not negative, but positive; not mere moral privation, but moral culpability. It consists not only in distrust of Jesus, and refusal to "receive" Him, but is itself the cause of these things (iii. 20 f.). Jesus is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." "Men loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil" (iii. 19). Numerous passages to the same effect may be gathered from the First Epistle, where, as is quite to be expected from its strong ethical character, the emphasis on the positive nature of sin is stronger than in the Gospel (*e.g.* i. 7-9; ii. 12; iii. 4). It is, I think, reasonable to suppose that the idea of sin as consisting

¹ ἐξηγησάτο, i. 18.

in an incapacity to "know" Jesus for what He is, has an outlook on the Hellenistic notion that to know God is to be free from moral disability; that this knowledge is the result of a natural capacity; that a man, in doing good, acts conformably not only to nature, but to *his* nature. "The virtuous man fulfils the law of his own being."¹

These aspects, then, of human sonship and its corollaries, human freedom and deliverance from fear, so strongly emphasised in this Gospel, can only be regarded as developed in opposition to some such environment as we have attempted to sketch. The environment no doubt owes much to other influences than those that can properly be called Stoic, but in these particular directions apparently the Stoic strain is the strongest, in the midst of this blend of influences. The greatest practical defect in the Stoic system of morality is that it is only possible for the enlightened, and has no pity for the common man. It is the prerogative of the "wise," not of the "foolish"; and the vast majority of men, according to the Stoic, belong to the latter class.² The Johannine "whosoever" and "whatsoever," an impossible and unwarrantable conception for the Stoic³ (John iii. 16; v. 22; xii. 32, 47), is the Christian charter of freedom even for the "foolish."

III. THE MYSTERY-RELIGIONS

A mood of pessimism and fatalism had taken possession, as we have seen, of popular Hellenistic thought during the period which may roughly be defined as extending from about 30 B.C. to A.D. 110. The mood expressed itself chiefly in the underlying postulates that the body is the grave of the soul, and that the individual's destiny is bound up with the course of natural

¹ Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* ix. 42; cf. Epict., *Diss.* iii. 24.

² Cf. Davidson, *op cit.*, p. 156 f.

³ On the question whether the later Stoics made any concessions to human weakness and incapacity, see Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 173, and Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 73, who take different points of view.

events. The later Stoicism failed to meet the situation. "Human nature" is greater than Nature, and the ineradicable craving was still there for an assurance of immortality—for a "life eternal," not only in duration but above all in kind, a life that would last and represent a permanent victory over the daily ills, vicissitudes, and circumstances of men. Christianity says that there is such a life, and that, as the Fourth Evangelist so often emphasises, it is here and now.

According to the later Stoic doctrine, only the purified soul winged its way through the various spheres of the universe, until it arrived at that bliss of which Posidonius speaks, the bliss of "watching the stars go round." The occupation sounds monotonous, but what he really implies is that the movements of the heavenly bodies are intimately connected with the sufferings and destinies of men. He means that the purified soul knows all about the causes of things, and is at rest. "Happy is he," says Vergil, "who is able to trace the causes of things, and who has cast beneath his feet all fears, and inexorable destiny, and the noise of greedy Acheron."¹

How and when is this blissful condition attained? The soul "who in the body had retained its purity flew instantly on being liberated to the region of the pure stars, cleaving the gross atmosphere like a shaft of flame. But the others, more or less weighed down by the foulness they had contracted in the body, rose only till they reached an air of their own quality. There they remained floating till their substance regained its clearness and they too could mount beyond the moon. But some were so burdened with uncleanness that they were pulled back again into new bodies and once more experienced passion and pain. That was how they were punished. For the only real hell was found here on this earth, and the impure were ever drawn back into it anew."² This process of purification might be endlessly repeated.³ A soul might pass through ten thousand births, ere it landed on the shore, and reached the goal of all its striving.

¹ *Georgics*, ii. 490-2.

² Bevan, *SS*, pp. 107-9

³ Cf. Vergil, *Æneid*, vi. 724 ff.

The position was further complicated by the belief that the universe itself has only a temporary existence. Its history is contained in an infinite and unvarying series of cycles,¹ each of which is ended by a great conflagration. Then comes a "regeneration," or rebirth, of all things and a new cycle commences. "The exact same incidents and events come round in one cycle as had happened in the previous cycles: the same people, the same experience, the same history and achievements, the same failures are reproduced—inexorable fate and dire necessity rule all."²

In other words, men felt themselves in dire need of "salvation,"³ security, deliverance. Christianity did not create, but found this demand for salvation when it entered upon its missionary activity. The need expressed itself as a longing for divine help, for redemption, and for a blessed life after death. The word "salvation" is never used in the Fourth Gospel; "eternal life" takes its place. That is probably because the term "salvation" (*sōtēria*) had come to be connected so exclusively with pagan religion. The idea, however, is strongly marked. Words like "keep," "peace," "joy," are characteristic of the Gospel. "None shall pluck them out of the Father's hand." What must it have meant to men thus disturbed, perplexed, and afraid, in the presence of the hurtful and hateful things of life, to hear the great new message that God had manifested Himself in an actual human personality, in human flesh, in One Who hungered, and thirsted, and was tempted; that Jesus was the Son of Man from heaven through Whom all things were made, revealing heaven's deepest secrets; that He has returned thither, still remaining in living touch with all who "believe in Him," and giving assurance of Eternal Life; that the secrets of heaven were all declared in one open secret, the person of Jesus, the Son of Man who came down from

¹ Cf. Davidson, *SC*, 91.

² Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

³ The goddess in the Isis-mystery is said to transplant the initiate into a new life of "salvation," or as it is elsewhere put, "to allow him to enter into her kingdom." This is equivalent to being "born again."

heaven to reveal the yearning love of God for men, the heart of the Father? (John i. 51; iii. 16).

What, then, is the message of the mysteries to the pessimism and fatalism of the age? In a single word their central doctrine is expressed in the word, "initiation." The initiated man is the "saved" man, who has penetrated even here in this life the great secret or mystery of eternal life, by mystical union with the Divine. The Divine, "God," was thought of as manifested in various forms upon earth. The old mythology returned. It was by union with one or other of these ancient "gods" that salvation was attained. By lustrations, sacraments, asceticism, or immediate mystic experiences the "initiate" has attained and become *perfect*.¹ He *knows*, has become possessed of *gnosis*, or knowledge, has become a *gnostic*,² in distinction from the mass of his fellows, who are uninitiated, remaining in ignorance, and therefore in fear and perplexity. The *initiate* is *saved*. How? Because his knowledge is not a mere intellectual knowledge. It transcends the limits of the intellect and is mediated in an ecstatic experience. It is a mystical experience which has as its basis a real union and merging of being with the god of the mystery. The initiate did not hesitate to describe himself as *deified*. Essentially and originally the individual is a spark from the Divine, and this essential being is here and now made real. The state of soul, otherwise obtained through countless rebirths, is reached now. Sometimes the initiate is spoken of as *the image of God, the son of God*. In a sense he *is* God.³ He has obtained *eternal Life*. The *seeds* of immortality are in him. He has *seen* the Divine face to face, and the vision is not death, but life. His soul is purified, sometimes by repeated initiations, and at death will escape without hindrance or fear to the upper region where God is. A very common name for the mystic experience of

¹ The terms in italics are all terms used in the mystery-religions.

² The later Gnosticism was a developed philosophical system; but "gnostic" was used in the mystery cults to describe the initiated man.

³ Cf. Gilbert Murray, *FSGR*, p. 142.

initiation is to be *born again*, a term, however, that is common to all mystical systems of thought, ancient and modern. The initiate is also said to have received the divine *glory*. The very substance of his being has been transformed into a divine essence. He has been *glorified* or *enlightened* (cf. John i. 9), a foretaste of the glory yet to come. In the same mystic experience, his soul is said to *ascend to heaven* (cf. John iii. 13). By his *knowledge* he receives *power* (the very word in John i. 12, A.V.) to become sinless and holy like God. As *born again*, he obtains *power* over nature, and in prayer can bend to his will heaven, earth, and the *elements* or natural forces (cf. John xiv. 14 ; xv. 7). Actually the word *logos* is used to describe the spiritual essence that enters into the worshipper at the *second birth*.¹

A word of caution is, however, very necessary here. No one can fail to be struck, in reading the account of mystery terminology just given, with the extraordinary similarity of expression to much of the thought in the Fourth Gospel. At the same time we must beware of forgetting two things. *First*, that pre-Christian Judaism itself had been influenced both by Oriental and Greek religious thought ; *secondly*, that in the main stream of pure Judaism there is an element of mystical thought. To *know* God, for example, is an idea that lies at the root of the experience of the prophets. They too *saw* God. God spoke even to Moses " face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend " (Exod. xxxiii. 11). We need only recall Isaiah's vision, or Hosea's language, " I will betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord " (ii. 20), or Ps. lxxiii. 23-26, to see that mysticism, at least of a kind, was not foreign to Jewish thought.² No word is more misused to-day than the term "mysticism." The real mystical experience is complete absorption of personality in God, and utter inability to express in words all that happened in the mystical state. Yet the Old Testament prophets and New Testament mystical writers are able to describe their visions. The sense

¹ For an account of an initiation ceremony see H. A. A. Kennedy, *PMR*, pp. 100 ff.

² Cf. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, pp. 33 ff.

of individuality is not submerged. In this sense alone the Fourth Evangelist is a mystic.

At the same time, one of the most striking qualities of the Christian faith is its power of adapting itself to the thought of every age and people. It is essentially a missionary religion, and we must not confuse those changes in the outward form of its expression that are suggested by contact with other forms of religious thought, with actual borrowing of central ideas from other sources. Pure Christianity is not a blend of religions. Expressions, for example, like *glory*, *glorify*, would have one shade of meaning for a Jew, and another for a Greek. The Fourth Evangelist, in speaking to Greeks of Asia Minor, uses forms of expression that seemed to be predestined to meet the deepest needs both of Jew and Greek.

Take the expression, "Son of Man," which, for the Jew, came to be a synonym for Messiah. Jesus, no doubt, applied the expression to Himself from the Book of Daniel, or perhaps from the non-canonical Book of Enoch; and yet, as we have already seen, He, for the first time, associated the term with suffering and dying (pp. 10 ff.). By so doing He gave offence to the Jew (John xii. 34). The Greek, however, was perfectly familiar with the idea of a suffering and dying god.¹ The Greek believed that the gods themselves were subject to death,² and that only through death was it possible to communicate life. He saw in the annual processes of decay and resurrection of vegetable life, the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying, the death and resurrection to life of the god Dionysus, the spirit of vegetation.

Similar ideas are found in Babylonian and Egyptian religion. In the mystery-religions these gods and goddesses who had thus died were worshipped as those who alone had the keys of death. The worshipper, by becoming united with them in mystic fashion, became himself divine, and immediately victorious over death. Now, although such ideas were familiar to the Hellenistic world which was destined to be the second cradle of Christianity, after

¹ Cf. J. Harrison, *AAR*, pp. 89 ff.

² *Deus mortalis* (Cicero).

the breach with Judaism, and although the dying god was sometimes hailed as *Sōtēr* or Saviour, one central element in the conception of God, contributed by Christianity, was absent in Hellenistic thought of the divine act in descending from heaven to earth. Really the god of Hellenism was subjected to death by an external necessity. The Greek gods who died and rose again were really poetico-religious personifications of inevitable natural processes, such as the alternate growth and decay of vegetation. In the form of Osiris, Attis, or Tammuz, the supreme divinity manifested himself on earth for the purpose of periodically rousing a dead creation to life again.¹

The motive of the Incarnation in the New Testament is the love and compassion of God: "He first loved us." Jesus came in order to suffer and die, and rise again, of His own free will, in love and compassion for men, and was sent in the eternal purpose of the Father. Moreover, what Jesus came to deliver or "save" men from was sin, and not merely the bondage of sense. "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil one" (John xvii. 15; cf. xvii. 11). God loves the world, and the world is the world of individual men. They are dying through sin, and Jesus was manifested to take away our sins.

Too much stress cannot be laid on this aspect of the Christian Gospel, inasmuch as the wildest statements have been made, deriving not only Paul's, but John's whole conception of the Incarnation from the Hellenistic conception of the dying god.² The important thing to note is that these Hellenistic ideas can only be regarded as a *preparatio evangelica*. The descent of the Son of Man from heaven for the salvation of the world is predominantly Jewish in its origin. The form in which the idea is expressed, especially in the Fourth Gospel, owes much to Hellenism. The death of Jesus, for example, in this Gospel is not conceived so much as an atoning sacrifice—although

¹ Cf. description of ox-sacrifice, p. 126.

² E.g. Loisy, *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1911; Murray, *FSGR*, pp. 144 ff.; but see Kennedy, *PMR*, 211 ff.

that category is in the background—but rather as a means of communicating eternal life to men. It is remarkable that the word “cross” is never used in the Gospel, except in those chapters where the story of the Crucifixion is being told. For *crucify*, the Evangelist uses *glorify* or *lift up*. As we shall see in the exposition, the Crucifixion is the first step in the ascent of Jesus to glory. It is also the overthrow of the Prince of this world. Here we have an example of the extraordinary adaptability of the Christian faith, of its power of “becoming all things to all men, if by any means some may be saved.” The Fourth Evangelist is only doing what Paul himself could not help doing, what every Christian missionary actually does. He speaks the language, and enters into the thought of his time, and of the people whom he is evangelising.

We may fitly conclude by emphasising the extreme importance of realising that the Fourth Gospel is the work of a missionary. Modern scholarship has made it certain that the form in which Christianity expresses itself in the Hellenistic world was largely influenced by contact with Hellenistic thought itself. Clearly this Gospel is intended to present the doctrines of Christianity, and, above all, the person of Jesus, in such a way that the Hellenist may see in Him “the Father”; may find full satisfaction for all his finer emotions and aspirations in Jesus, and may escape all those painful processes of initiation that were deemed necessary in order to achieve union with God. This “vision of God” the Fourth Evangelist found in the historic person of Jesus Christ, who was also, for him and for his fellow-believers, the same as the glorified Jesus with Whom he was inseparably united. “That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled concerning the Word of Life . . . declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us.”

CHAPTER IV

CONSTRUCTION AND AUTHORSHIP

I. CONSTRUCTION

BEFORE we consider the question of authorship, it is necessary nowadays to decide the question, *whether the Gospel is all written by the same hand*. Investigation of the internal evidence has inclined me strongly to the view that the Gospel, as we have it, consists of memoirs or notes of the preaching of the Apostle John,¹ which have been edited, and set in a definite *chronological* framework. Within the limits of this book it is impossible to justify all the steps that led up to this analysis. One can only hope that certain outstanding features of it will commend it to the reader, and at least be a convenient basis of study. In the notes on the Gospel I have made no attempt to harmonise the chronology with the Synoptics. That is a barren and mechanical endeavour.

Briefly, the literary analysis of the Gospel is based on the hypothesis that in the Gospel as it stands, disregarding for the moment chap. xxi., we find apparently *two divergent plans of construction* :—

(1) The incidents and discourses of the Gospel are grouped according to what might be called an *ideal* plan, in which the narratives and discourses, not only in themselves, reflect ideas about the person of Jesus, but are grouped, often irrespective of chronological sequence, in order to illustrate certain aspects

¹ In Hastings' *DCG*, vol. i., *Art.* (critical) *Gospel of St John*, I sought to maintain that the Gospel, as it stands, is the work of John, son of Zebedee—a position which I must now considerably modify.

of faith in Him, and of the conflict between belief and unbelief. This is the plan that governs the arrangement of what may be called the Johannine material.

(2) Another plan has been superimposed on this, a *chronological* one, which, ignoring the ideal sequence, has for its object to give a historically connected form to the Gospel. An editor (**R.**) tried thereby to produce a work more in harmony with what he thought a Gospel ought to be.¹

There are strong reasons for thinking that **R.** did not write the appendix (chap. xxi.). If any are interested enough to pursue the matter further, a fuller account will be found in *The Expository Times*, vol. xxvii. p. 22 ff.; and in the *Expositor*, series viii., vol. vii. pp. 255 ff. See also the discussion in connection with the place occupied by the Cleansing of the Temple incident in this Gospel (pp. 87 f.). It was really the position given to that story in the Gospel that suggested the present conception of a dual plan in the Gospel.

General Analysis of the Gospel

Even although the position taken up by the present writer, —that the Gospel as it stands is the work of more than one writer,—is not regarded as convincing, the analysis may prove useful as a basis of study. The references to chapters in the exposition are put in brackets. The analysis is based on the supposed ideal plan alone, and for the moment the **R.** passages are left out of account.

ANALYSIS

- I. The General Theme described in THE PROLOGUE, i. 1-18 :
Jesus is the Logos, the complete Revelation of the Father.
(Chapter I.)
- II. THE GROWTH OF FAITH AND OF UNBELIEF,
i. 19-xii. 36.

¹ The passages assigned to **R.** will be found on p. 59.

2. **The Conflict developed under the ideas of Truth and Falsehood**, viii. 12-ix. 41.

The truth about Jesus is known—

- (1) **Through His own self-consciousness**, viii. 12-59 (culminating in the Pre-existence utterance, v. 58). (Chapter IX.)
- (2) **By the evidence of Christian experience**, ix. 1-41, introduced and illustrated by the healing of the man born blind. (Chapter X.)

3. **The Conflict developed as an answer to the question : Is there salvation outside the Jewish Church ?** x. 1-42 ; suggested by the Excommunication of the Blind Man, and illustrated by the Allegory of the Fold and the Flock. (Chapter XI.)

- (1) *The Allegory* (vv. 1-6).
- (2) *What Christian experience has to say about excommunication* (vv. 7-10).
- (3) *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the basis of Christian unity* (vv. 11-21).
- (4) *The Good Shepherd identified with God* (vv. 22-42).

4. **The Culmination of the Conflict—the Cross**, xi. 1-xii. 36.

- (1) **The Main Aspect of Jesus' Death**, introduced and illustrated by the Raising of Lazarus : Jesus is the Lord of Life, and His Death is determined by Himself (xi. 1-46). (Chapter XII.)
- (2) **Other Aspects of Jesus' Death.**
 - (a) *His Death as determined by the Ecclesiastical Authorities*, xi. 47-57.
 - (b) *His Death understood by one at least*, xii. 1-8.
 - (c) *His Death as Messianic Victory*, xii. 9-19.
 - (d) *The Significance of His Death for the Greek World*, xii. 20-36.

(xii. 37-50 is an Evangelistic Summary of the significance of the Public Ministry as a whole.) (Chapter XIII.)

III. THE STORY OF THE CROSS—A VICTORY, AND NOT A DEFEAT, xiii.-xx.

1. Jesus alone with His Friends.¹

The Betrayal Night, xiii.-xvii.

- (a) The Sacrament of Humility, xiii. 1-17.
- (b) The Unmasking of the Traitor, } (Chapter XIV.)
xiii. 18-31a (to 'Jesus said').
- (c) The Farewell Discourses. (General topic: An Abiding Union and an Abiding Ministry.)
- (a) *Union with Christ*, xv. 1-27. (Chapter XV.)
- (β) *The work of the Holy Spirit*, } (Chapter XVI.)
xvi. 1-15.
- (γ) *The Second Coming*, xvi. 16-33.
- (δ) *Some current perplexities (including Peter's denial) and their answers*, xiii. 31b-xiv. 24. } (Chapter XVII.)
- (e) *A final promise of peace and victory in presence of the Great Unknown*, xiv. 25-31.
- (d) The Prayer of the Great High Priest, xvii. 1-26. (Chapter XVIII.)

2. The Separation from the Disciples, and apparent Triumph of the Powers of Evil.

- (1) The Arrest and Trial of Jesus, xviii. 1-xix. 16.
- (a) *The Arrest*, xviii. 1-14.
- (b) *Trial before Annas*, xviii. 19-24.
- (c) *Trial before Pilate*, xviii. 28- } (Chapter XIX.)
xix. 16.
- (d) *The Denial of Peter* (an episode), }
xviii. 15-18, 25-27.
- (2) The Crucifixion and Burial, xix. 17-42. (Chapter XX.)

¹ The arrangement of chapters and verses in xiii.-xvi., xviii., are those adopted in Dr Moffatt's *The New Testament, a New Translation*.

3. **The Triumph of Jesus. Resurrection and Reunion with the Church, xx. 1-31.** (Chapter XXI.)

The Appendix to the Gospel, xxi. 1-25. (Chapter XXII.)

PASSAGES SUGGESTED AS BELONGING TO R.

In the foregoing analysis, which may be used as a basis of study along with the exposition where fuller treatment of many points will be found, no account has been taken of those passages which are assigned to R. If the student will mark in red ink in his Bible the following passages, he will gain an idea of the way in which it is suggested the Gospel should be analysed. All passages not so marked may be regarded as belonging to the original Johannine material. Opinion may differ here and there as to the reasonableness of the division adopted; but work of this kind must always remain more or less tentative. It is to be carefully noted that *all notes of time and place in the Gospel are not to be referred to R.* Many of these are marks of an eye-witness, almost unconsciously introduced, and are to be distinguished from those cases where either a statement of time or place, a connection of thought, or a piece of narrative has been introduced to give chronological unity to a writing whose original basis of construction was a sequence of ideas.

(Arguments for the position accorded to these passages will be found in *The Expository Times*, vol. xxvii. pp. 22 ff. Space forbids their repetition here.)

Chapter ii. 1, 12, 23-25.

„ iv. 1-3, 43-46a.

„ vi. 1, 2, 6, 15, 23.

„ vii. 1, 10.

„ x. 40-42.

„ xi. 2, 17, 19, 30, 31, 38-46.

„ xii. 1b (*where L. was . . . from the dead*), 9-11, 17, 18.

„ xx. 2-10, 24-29.

2. AUTHORSHIP

If we assume that chap. xxi. is a later addition to chaps. i.-xx., as they now stand, the statement in xxi. 24 is the earliest piece of extant external evidence for the apostolic authorship of the Gospel, and warrants the closest consideration. The writer says that the "disciple whom Jesus loved" is he "who witnesseth of these things and wrote these things," *evidently referring to the whole Gospel as it stands*. It is further added, "We know that his witness is true." Who are the "we"? Most probably a small body of pupils or disciples of the Apostle are meant. Clement of Alexandria (born about A.D. 150; died about A.D. 213-220) says that "last of all, John, perceiving that the bodily facts had been set forth in the other Gospels, at the instance of his disciples and with the inspiration of the Spirit composed a spiritual Gospel." With this may be compared the statement of the Muratorian Canon (c. A.D. 200): "It was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John should narrate everything in his own name, subject to the revision of the rest." These statements do not necessarily have independent historical value, and may be founded on xxi. 24. They also leave room for the possibility that the "disciples" of John, or one of them, may have partially given the Gospel its present shape.¹ At the same time, the statement in xxi. 24 is perfectly clear. It attributes the authorship of chaps. i.-xx. to the Apostle John.

What, then, does this attribution of authorship to the Apostle imply? We are at once brought face to face with a problem that meets us, both in the Old and New Testament, that the authorship of certain books is attributed to men who cannot possibly, on the best critical evidence, have written them. How are we to reconcile this question of pseudonymity with the authority of Scripture? Each case must be treated by itself. In the case of the Fourth Gospel, there is strong reason for believing that memoirs of John, son

¹ Cf. Hastings, *DCG*, i. p. 881a.

of Zebedee, formed the basis of the Gospel ;¹ but to some it will still appear strange that a man should be said to have written a book when he did not actually write it as it stands. I know no kind of question in connection with the New Testament where it is more imperatively necessary to rid ourselves of prejudice and preconception. On the one hand, prejudice makes itself felt when it is said that a fisherman of Galilee could not have written this philosophical Gospel. As a matter of fact we habitually underestimate the educational capacity of these "fishermen," and habitually overestimate the philosophic insight of this particular Gospel. Even Jesus surprised His contemporaries, as "knowing letters, having never learnt," and we may be allowed to suppose that He communicated something of His own intellectual power to men who were His constant companions and need not already have been deficient in the same, although they were self-taught and had never been at a Rabbinical Academy (*cf.* "unlettered and unlearned men," *i.e.* not university men ! Acts iv. 13).² His Spirit often does the same thing to-day. We also tend to overestimate the philosophical ability of the writer of the Gospel. I think that there are many parts of it where one feels that the writer is dealing with thoughts too high for him, and any philosophical terms used are those that had passed into popular speech. Yet we are conscious that if he had taken hold of them more academically, the rugged strength of his appeal and the power of his sheer assertion, with all the personal conviction behind it, would have been lost. An academic type of mind, in matters of religion, often cannot see the wood for the trees.

Again, preconceived notions have often blinded us to the real perspective of questions of authorship in the New Testament. To publish to-day, under another man's name, a book which contained even a single sentence he did not actually write, without any indication of the fact, would rightly be regarded as something akin to fraud. In the very early days of the Christian

¹ Whether John is responsible for the "ideal" plan in which his memoirs are cast must remain an open question.

² *Cf.* Johnston, *PFG*, p. 14 f.

Church, however, Gospels and books of that kind did not bring either fame or money. To interpret the life of Jesus was a very sacred task, and one in the doing of which a pupil would, out of sheer humility, attribute his own deepest and noblest thoughts rather to his master, who had led him to Jesus than to himself. The pupil was deeply conscious of his master's influence, and viewed even his own writings not as a private venture of his own, but as the propagation and extension of his master's spirit. The Christian teacher himself would not regard every thought of his as his own, something in which to assert rights of property, but as Christ's. The Spirit leads into "all the truth." In all this we are required to see humility and self-effacement rather than any wish to deceive. For generations we in the West have been misled into believing, that all such questions of pseudonymity relating to the Bible can be settled by a profession of moral indignation. Ugly words like "forgery" are used to browbeat the judgment into a blind acceptance of tradition, interpreted from a modern point of view. It is not easy to rethink the thoughts, and to reproduce the attitude in these matters, of men twenty centuries ago. Yet the task must be undertaken, if the Bible is not to remain a sealed book to many.

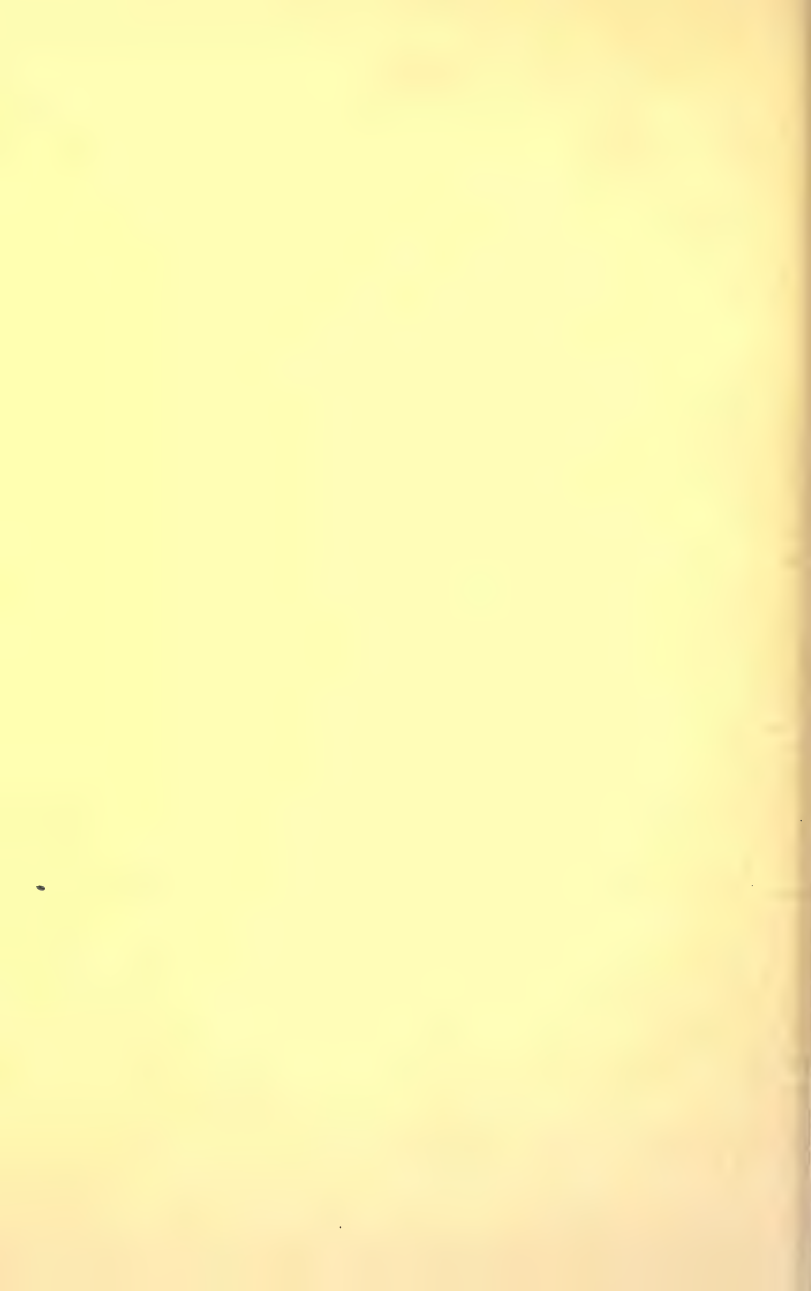
Critical opinion, it may be further stated, is unanimous in claiming that the author is a Jew. It is also fairly unanimous in dating the Gospel between A.D. 90 and 110. There are many passages where either the hand of an eye-witness is very prominent, or a most remarkable feat of realistic construction has been performed. The writer's geographical details have been amply vindicated. For a consideration of the one question that is now really prominent in the external evidence, the supposed tradition that the Apostle never lived to old age in Ephesus at all, but died a martyr at the same time as James, in Palestine, I must refer the student to Dean Armitage Robinson's note in his published lectures on *The Historical Character of St John's Gospel* (pp. 64 ff.). The evidence adduced in favour of the tradition is extremely precarious.

The Bible student is tempted to exaggerate the importance

of this question of authorship. Faith cannot subordinate itself to the results of critical and scientific investigation. The authority of Scripture does not rest on such results. The authority of Scripture is not one that can be superimposed. It imposes itself. The only question that faith needs to ask, and has the means of answering, is this: "Is this Gospel a genuine product of first-hand Christian experience?" Even though the writer be entirely unknown, if his picture of Jesus and his representation of His words and teaching, awaken echoes in the depths of our being and meet our deepest needs, as they did in a more ancient world, that in itself is an authority not lightly to be resisted. May we not echo the words of Jesus to Peter, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me!" If, in our study, we succeed in making clear to ourselves what really is meant by the historical Jesus, the question of authority will answer itself. Jesus is historical, in the first place, because He has roots in the history of His own time, and in His teaching reflects its manners and customs and ways of thought. He is also historical in this Gospel, as in other New Testament writings, because He is rooted, as the Risen and Glorified One, in the heart of the Evangelist and in the history of individual souls. It is written for those whose dwelling was outside the limits of Palestinian Judaism, seeking "salvation" in an environment of Hellenistic life and thought, which is alien to the original environment of Jesus of Nazareth. His own word has come true, "It is expedient for you that I go away"; otherwise not only the Hellenist, but the world, would be ignorant of Him to-day. The Fourth Evangelist is one of those who, when Jesus seemed to have disappeared, and the promise of His return was being looked for in vain, found his way back, or rather was brought back to His Presence, and could say, like Paul, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." The stars might still wander, and the way of the soul be dark; yet he knew whither he was going, and his feet did not stumble. He is still the "beloved disciple." He is no longer lost in a trackless universe, but dwells securely even here in the Father's house; and, after death, there are many "mansions." All rests for him as for us on the supreme

fact of the life and death of Jesus, interpreted by experience, and, we may also add, upon His honour also. "If it were not so, I would have told you." "Ye believe in God ; believe also in Me."

EXPOSITION



CHAPTER I

I. The Prologue, i. 1-18

The Logos

THE Prologue to the Gospel is its preface. We shall expect to find in it the plan on which the Gospel is constructed. It cannot be fully understood except after studying the Gospel itself; for what is expressed in the Prologue in the abstract, is expressed more in the concrete and in detail in the body of the Gospel. In the Prologue the Evangelist gives us his general conception of Jesus. We have already seen his purpose in writing, and the symbolic use he makes of the history, in order to make plain his idea of Jesus Christ. In *vv.* 1-18 he is really giving a summary of his teaching about the person of Jesus, and the significance for faith of His appearance in history.

vv. 1-5.—These opening verses recall Genesis i. 1-5. The Evangelist is thinking of the New Creation—the new world, the new men that Jesus by His coming has created.

(1) The Evangelist believes that Jesus was pre-existent before His life on earth; *cf.* iii. 13, 31; vi. 33, 38; viii. 58; xvii. 4, 5, 24. The Jewish conception of pre-existence is somewhat difficult for us to understand. For example, "Wisdom" in Prov. viii. 22-31 is said to be pre-existent. This pre-existence, however, is poetical in its origin. Wisdom is personified, as a modern poet might personify "Spring" or "Death." Again, in the Jewish Targums¹ we have a similar personification of the *Memra*, or Word of God. God had come to be regarded as more and more exalted above, and withdrawn from the world, and His "Word" was God as manifesting Himself in

¹ These Targums consist of translations or paraphrases of the Old Testament books made in the Aramaic dialect.

nature or in history. Yet the *Memra* is not distinct from God except as an outward manifestation of His presence, and if it is personified it is only poetically. Thus the Fourth Evangelist is not moving outside Jewish thought when he speaks of the Word of God as at the same time distinct from, and yet identical with God. He gives it, however, a Greek name, *Logos*—why, we shall see presently. He identifies Jesus with the *Logos*, and says that He existed, as *Logos*, “in the beginning.” He was “with God,” and “He was God.”

We must realise that the Evangelist is basing his speculation on the facts of his own Christian experience. He is summing up in the Prologue what Jesus had come to mean for him and for the Christian Church. He says, “Here are the facts of the historical life of Jesus, as I have interpreted them in the Gospel. I shall now interpret them in the light of eternity. Jesus is the expression or declaration of God, fully and finally to men (v. 18). He that has seen Him has seen the Father.” He does not concern himself with the very serious difficulties we have. He simply gives Jesus the same place as God Himself occupied in men’s experience; and his reason for so doing is not the result of argument, but of experience (*cf.* v. 14).

(2) Why does he use the Greek word “*Logos*”? Where does it come from? He is, in the first instance, simply translating *Memra* into “*Logos*,” because he is speaking to Greeks. Now the word “*Logos*” had other meanings for the Greek than simply “a word.” It also meant “Reason,” the ultimate principle of things. We may compare terms like “Vitalism” or “Evolution” to which we attach a kind of vague general meaning in popular talk. Similarly “*Logos*” was one of those popular terms much in use in the end of the first century in circles where men were sitting loose to the old tradition, and were feeling, as we feel, the spirit of a New Age. It is practically certain that John has not in view any particular philosophical system, but was very much in touch with popular thought. “Jesus Christ,” he really says, “is what you are really seeking. He is the *Logos*.”¹

¹ *Cf.* Johnston, *PFG*, pp. 101 ff.

In the Prologue a Christian man is speaking whose fear of sin and death and all evil powers has been taken away by faith in Jesus (1 John iv. 18), who has himself been born again into a new world. He boldly faces the pagan world with a message which satisfies him, and he is sure will satisfy them. It has come to him through the life and words and resurrection of Jesus. He is so sure of it all that unbelief in Jesus is a perpetual wonder and tragedy to him. He speaks in the Prologue of Jesus as the Life of men, the Light of the world; and not to find what he and others have found in Him is death, or darkness. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended [perhaps "overcame"] it not" (v. 5). Men were speculating on the origin of the world and of human life. God, they said, cannot have made the world, or be directing it entirely: there is so much that is evil and wrong in it. John faces the problems of pain and sin in his knowledge of Jesus Christ, and urges his Christian readers so to face them. He boldly says, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made" (v. 3). Apparently some of his readers tended to believe that the world, with all its pain and sorrow, must be the handiwork of inferior spiritual beings. The later Jews called these "angels." The writer of Hebrews feels the pressure of the same set of views (i. 1-14). He does not destroy the belief in "angels," but calls them "ministering spirits" (v. 14). Jesus is above the angels (v. 4), and God made the worlds through Him (v. 2). We find the same class of ideas mirrored in the thought of Paul (e.g. Col. i. 16, 17). John has very little to say about "angels" or "spirits." He speaks most often of "Satan," or the "Prince of this world," as chief of the demons; the good angels are the ministers of the Son of Man (i. 51). We may find it difficult, and in one sense impossible, to think of Jesus in quite the same terms as John did; but his doctrine that the world was made "through Him" (v. 3), simply means for us to-day the personal belief, verifiable in personal experience, that God created, and is still creating the world, guiding and governing it, on the great principle of re-

demptive love as manifested in Jesus. The creative "Word," which became flesh, is "full of grace and truth"; and Jesus, as the unique revelation of the "glory" or nature of God, is not only the "Word" in the purely Jewish sense, but the "Logos," or ultimate source and origin of all things, for which the world of John's day was seeking. John is sure of the love of God in his own life, and he boldly interprets pain, and sin, and sorrow in terms of that experience. We cannot insist too strongly in our study of this Gospel, that the Evangelist is not writing or thinking as a philosopher. He is simply drawing a great inference from the historical facts of the life and teaching of Jesus, as he experienced them, when he calls Him, in this comprehensive way, the "Logos, the only-begotten Son of God."

vv. 6-8.—It seems strange to find the Baptist suddenly introduced into the midst of the Prologue. That is done only because the Gospel has in view a tendency rife in contemporary religious thought, to give to the Baptist the place that Jesus alone ought to have. (See pp. 77 f. for fuller discussion of this point.)

vv. 9-13.—Note that the phrase "coming into the world" is to be connected, not with "man," but with "light." Jesus is the "true" or "genuine" Light. No doubt John is thinking of Gen. i. 3. There "Light" appears before "Life." Here the "Life" is the Light of men (*v. 4*). The coming of Jesus is the New Creation. The whole world was lying in darkness until He came.

In *v. 10* the Evangelist strikes that tragic note that sounds all through the Gospel. A world that had been created through the Logos rejects Him when He appears. It must have been a great burden for the faith of his time to bear, that even the chosen nation, "His own," should crucify Jesus.

In *v. 12* the figure is changed from light to sonship. Note that the Evangelist always uses τέκνον (child) and not υἱός (son) when he speaks of men as sons of God (*cf. 1 John iii. 1*). What prevents a man from being a "child" of God is not any disability in his own constitution or nature, but an inability

of will. He either will not, or cannot believe in the Fatherhood of God, because of some sin, or some intellectual perplexity. What Jesus gives is "Light" that is at the same time "Life." He gives men *the power* (ἐξουσία) to become children of God (v. 12). That "power" is the power of "believing in His name." Faith is an act of our whole being, called forth in us by God, through the personality of Jesus (*cf.* vi. 29). It is the effect of our experience of Jesus as we know Him in the New Testament, in other words the work of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be too strongly insisted that faith is not ultimately the acceptance of certain propositions about Jesus, God, and the world. The forms under which men express their faith may vary from age to age, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Who "leads into all the truth." Before you can demand a swimming certificate you must enter the water. Experiment comes before proof. Faith is the raw material out of which dogmas or propositions are made.

Many, to-day, accept this point of view, that experience is the ultimate thing; "but," they say, "I am incapable of it. My temperament is otherwise. I cannot pretend to feel what I do not, as a matter of fact, feel." As regards this very real and very sincere difficulty, I would like to point out that, in all probability, this Evangelist has a similar difficulty in his mind when he uses the word "power." In the language of the mystery-religions (see pp. 46 ff.) the word was used to denote the "power" that belonged to the "reborn" man to become really as God Himself, sinless, and delivered from the bondage of Fate. "Fate" played the same part in Hellenistic religion that "Nature," "Temperament," "Scientific Law" play in our thought to-day. The man who says that some people have the gift of faith or experience and others have not, is really saying that human life is governed by fate. The Evangelist emphasises that faith is not knowledge but "power." It is not a power which a man exerts independently, but it is the gift of God to all through Christ. The man is born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is God's will that all should have this "power." Really

the Evangelist is stating in another form Jesus' words about the kingdom or "reign" of God. It is "within you." The New Testament simply throbs with the sense that all things are possible, even a new heaven and a new earth, and the source of that sense of power is the "power" these early Christians felt at work in their own lives.

vv. 14-18.—*The Word became flesh.* These classical words are a centre around which have grown up a mass of theological speculation on the person of Jesus, and the Incarnation in particular. In our study we must be careful to consider their meaning, *not* according to the place they have come to take in theology, but according to the place they actually occupy in the Gospel. The Evangelist, in this great affirmation, is at the same time seeking to deny something. "Flesh" or "flesh and blood" is the Jewish expression for a human personality. The meaning is, "The Word became an actual human person." There were those who denied this, and held what is called a "Docetic" view of the Person of Jesus (see pp. 18 f.). The Evangelist, therefore, in his preface prepares us to expect a strong emphasis in his Gospel on the true humanity of Jesus. It was necessary to insist on it against those who denied it (*cf.* 1 John iv. 2 ; 2 John 7).

Dwelt among us, lit. "tabernacled." The glory of God was manifested in the Tabernacle (Exod. xl. 34 f.; *cf.* note on *Glory*, pp. 75 f.). In later Jewish thought, the word *Shekinah* was used in the Targums, or interpretations of the Old Testament Scriptures, to denote God as manifesting Himself in human life, or in a certain place. It is remarkable that the Targumists never speak, as the Old Testament does, of God as dwelling, for example, in His Temple (Hab. ii. 20); but they interpret this particular text in Habakkuk as meaning "Jehovah was pleased to cause His *Shekinah* to dwell," etc. The reason of this is that it was thought impious to bring God Himself into too close touch with humanity, or to limit His Presence in any way. Among Jewish Christians the word "tent" or "tabernacle" was used to translate *Shekinah*. The word in John i. 14 is the verb "tabernacled." "We beheld His glory"—actually

God's glory, and not a mere manifestation. Note that in ii. 21 the body of Jesus is called a "temple."

The only begotten from the Father; better, "an only-begotten from a Father." The phrase simply emphasises the unique Sonship of Jesus (*cf.* v. 18). The same word as here (*μονογένης*) is used of the widow's "only" son at Nain (Luke vii. 12; *cf.* viii. 42, x. 38; Heb. xi. 17).

v. 15.—The witness of John is again introduced, not only in order to remind the readers that according to the Baptist's own testimony he is not the Christ, but also to emphasise his saying about the pre-existence of Jesus.

v. 16.—*Fulness*; *cf.* Col. i. 19; ii. 9. The meaning is just that Jesus was a complete or full revelation of God's real character and purpose; *cf.* "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Jesus is also said not to have received the Spirit "by measure" (iii. 34), *i.e.* partially.

Have we all received; *cf.* Eph. i. 23; iii. 19; iv. 13. This is a thought akin to the abiding in Christ, and Christ abiding in men, of chap. xv. John speaks for his fellow-believers, and to his Christian readers. They have received *grace upon grace*, *i.e.* "one act of grace after another."¹ "Grace" is a word that occurs only in the Prologue, and nowhere else in the Gospel. The word would be familiar to the readers through the letters and the preaching of St Paul. It is practically the same word as "loving-kindness" in the Old Testament, but fuller in content, in proportion as the idea of God is fuller in the New Testament. It is really akin to "love," a word which John most often prefers to use. By "grace" he undoubtedly means to express God's love to men *in spite of their sin*, love of the unlovely.

v. 17.—The contrast is now drawn between the Law and the Gospel. The Law said, "Thou shalt not." The Gospel of Christ is that God loves all men, though they do not deserve

¹ *Godet*, in his commentary, interprets the phrase as meaning that "grace" is not received as the reward of merit, but just because men do not deserve it and yet have received it; this is their claim or title to a fresh bestowal.

it, and as a result of that experience men are set free, and feel that they must live worthily of it. Religion is the source of morality, and not only an additional motive. Jesus is *full of grace and truth*. The phrase "mercy and truth" is frequently used in the Old Testament. It is significant that the Fourth Evangelist substitutes "grace" for "mercy." His idea is not merely that God "spares" men out of compassion, but that He actively loves them. To do otherwise would be to deny His own nature (*cf.* iii. 16). The Evangelist's idea is that the Incarnation is only the inevitable result of God's real nature, as Father. Jesus is therefore "full of grace and truth" (or "reality"). The words for "full" and "fulness" are probably reminiscent of the language of certain heretics (Docetists; pp. 18 f.), who held that the Christ Spirit merely descended upon the man Jesus temporarily, out of the "fulness" of the Divine Nature. The Evangelist, here as elsewhere, is asserting that in Jesus men see God *Himself*. "In Him," as Paul says, "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

The phrase "grace and truth" might almost be paraphrased "grace, which is also reality." This love of God in Jesus is the ultimate fact of life. It is the nature of the "Logos," the final principle of the universe.

No man hath seen God at any time. John speaks a great deal about "seeing" God. In the mystery-religions the vision of the god or goddess was the goal reached by the initiated. That vision changed the worshipper. He was "reborn," and became divine and immortal. By no painful process of initiation, says the Evangelist, do men "see" God. God has come to men in Jesus, who has "interpreted" ¹ Him, *i.e.* interpreted Him to all. "Interpreter" or "Exegete" is the name given to the priest in the mysteries who interpreted to the worshipper oracles, omens, religious ceremonies. Jesus, says John, has done infinitely more. He has interpreted God. *Cf.* "We beheld His glory" (v. 14).

In the bosom of the Father; see note on xiii. 25.

¹ *lit.* "exegeses Him."

To sum up, we have in the Prologue an outline of the subjects and purpose of the whole Gospel.

1. 1-5.—Jesus is the *Logos* of which many are talking and which none have found; the answer to the whence, wherefore, and why of everything. He has brought life, which is also light.

2. 6-8.—The Baptist is not the Christ.

3. 9-11.—Jesus is the Light, but His own nation, with all their history and experience behind them, preferred darkness.

4. 14, 15.—Jesus was really and truly man, the *Logos* who became flesh, as the Baptist himself said.

5. 16, 17.—The Gospel is the result of the Evangelist's own experience, and that of the Christian Church.

6. 18.—Jesus alone, the "only begotten Son," has perfectly revealed God.

NOTE ON "GLORY"

~~XX~~ The Hebrew word so translated comes from a root meaning "heaviness." It stands for that which is *impressive* as a display of power or worth.¹ The word can be applied not only to God, but also to men (Gen. xxxi. 1) and to nations (Isa. xvii. 3, 4). The Greek word (*δόξα*) used in this Gospel means the opinion or repute that a man wins in the eyes of his fellows. Thus, both in Hebrew and in Greek, the word comes to mean practically the same. The "majesty" or "power" of Jesus, of which the miracles are external manifestations, is the majesty of God's love. The words of iii. 16, or the words "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," are simply repeating in another form what the Evangelist says in the Prologue (i. 14). Is this *really* inconsistent with the Synoptic idea of the function of miracles? Are not Jesus' words about His healing of the paralytic man (Mark ii. 10) a clear statement that the physical miracle is but a symbol of a greater wonder—His power to forgive sins, which is God's prerogative alone? Too much

¹ Cf. J. Skinner, *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Isaiah, vol. i., xlvii. f.

may easily be made of the disparity between the Synoptists and John on the subject of miracle. At the same time there is a difference of emphasis. The one lays stress on the compassion, and the other on the power. Both are elements in the Divine love. "Glory" is just the religious value of Jesus in "declaring" God (i. 18).

CHAPTER II

II. A.

Personal Faith in Jesus Christ ; *illustrated by the attitudes of Individuals towards the Historical Jesus.*

1. The Baptist

i. 19-35 (*cf.* iii. 22-30 ; iv. 1 ; v. 30-36 ; x. 40, 41)

The Baptist is mentioned previously, in the Prologue, in a remarkable way (i. 6, 15). There are three questions that we may ask ourselves. (1) Why is the Baptist so prominently mentioned in the Prologue, which is a summary of the main thought of the Gospel ? (2) Why is so much attention devoted to him, and to his message, in the course of the Gospel ? Note the passages mentioned above. (3) Why is it that the only aspect of his teaching that is recorded is that which emphasises his subordinate relationship to Jesus ? The apocalyptic expectation, and the moral strenuousness of his teaching with which we are familiar in the Synoptics (*e.g.* Matt. iii. 1-12), are not mentioned. This can only mean that the Evangelist here, as elsewhere, has concentrated on one particular aspect of the Baptist's mission, his witness to the person and work of Jesus. He wishes to emphasise the subordination of his person to the person of Jesus. This purpose is evident in such passages as i. 20, 26. In iii. 24 the Evangelist evidently wishes to correct the Synoptic tradition (Matt. iv. 12, 17 ; Mark i. 14, 15), which might be taken as implying that, only after John was imprisoned, did Jesus take up the work of preaching, necessarily relinquished by the forerunner. That would seem to suggest that Jesus only carried on the work begun by the

Baptist. John points out that they worked side by side for a time (iii. 22, 23 ; *cf.* also iii. 30).

All this would seem to point to an endeavour on the part of the Evangelist to meet some tradition current in the Ephesian community, that the Baptist was a more noteworthy personage than Jesus. Is there any trace of the existence of a sect that exalted John above Jesus, and even proclaimed the former as really the Messiah ? Turn to Acts xviii. 25 ; xix. 1-7, where a sect is mentioned holding views of this kind, which had sprung up under the teaching of Apollos. The passage in Acts refers to events that took place at an earlier date than that at which the Gospel was written ; but it is now widely accepted that we have in this passage traces of the beginnings of such a movement as is reflected in the pages of the Fourth Gospel. It should be noticed also, that great emphasis is laid in i. 26, 29, on the fact that the Baptist directed his followers *away from himself* to Jesus, and that probably all the names mentioned of early disciples in chapter i. were originally followers of the Baptist.

Some suggestions may now be given for a more detailed study of the passages relating to the Baptist.

(1) **The Deputation to the Baptist, vv. 19-28.**—The deputation consisted both of Priests and Levites (*v.* 19), and of Pharisees (*v.* 24, to be read as in A.V. and R.V. margin). It may have been a joint-deputation, sent by the Sanhedrin.

v. 20. With great emphasis (denoted by threefold repetition) the Baptist denies that he is the Messiah. He also denies that he is Elias or Elijah. Also that he is the "prophet." The questions of the deputation reflect vividly the popular Messianic expectations of the time ; *cf.* Mal. iv. 5 ; Matt. xvii. 9-13, for the expectation that Elijah would reappear bodily to prepare the world for Messiah's advent ; and Deut. xviii. 15, for the idea of "the prophet." The "prophet" is also referred to in John vi. 14 ; vii. 40 ; Matt. xvi. 14.

v. 23.—The Baptist claims, in the language of Isa. xl. 3, to be only a "voice." This modesty on his part is further illustrated in iii. 25-30.

The "voice" referred to in Isaiah is the voice of the herald who was sent beforehand, when a great king desired to traverse a certain district, in order to proclaim that where there was no road, the road must be made or prepared. We have already seen that not much is said of the ethical message of the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel, but it is here reflected. The one theme of the Gospel is the person of Jesus, and the Baptist is regarded as preparing the way for Him to enter heart and life. The Baptist stands for an appeal to "the hands and feet and active will" of men;¹ cf. Matt. iii. 1-12; Luke iii. 3-14.

v. 25.—*Why baptizest thou then?* A question that would affect the Pharisees as being most particularly interested in the outward forms of religion. They suspect an unauthorised performance of religious rites, and desire to know what is John's relation to the established order of things. Probably such ideas as we find in Zech. xiii. 1, or Ezek. xxxvi. 25, were in their minds. They expected that a general purification of the people would take place, by means of baptism, before the coming of the Messiah. The Baptist emphasises that his baptism is symbolic only. He baptises with water; Jesus will baptise with the Holy Spirit.

v. 27.—To be read as in R.V.

v. 28.—*Bethabara*; rather *Bethany* (R.V.). The site is not exactly identified, but it is not to be confused with Bethany of xi. 18.

(2) **The Baptist's witness to Jesus, vv. 29-34.**—*Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.* "Lamb of God" was a term current of the Messiah in certain circles (Acts viii. 32; 1 Peter i. 18, 19; Rev. v. 6, 12). It is no doubt suggested by the language of Isa. liii. 4. There can be little doubt that in the mind of the Evangelist, though not necessarily in the mind of the Baptist, the Paschal lamb is in view. The Fourth Gospel, in contrast to the other three, makes quite plain that Jesus was crucified, not on the Passover day, but the day before (xiii. 1), the day on which the Paschal lamb was slain. His reference in xix. 36 is also significant.

¹ Cf. G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, vol. ii. pp. 80 f.

(a) Is it a historical possibility that at this early stage the atoning significance of the death of Jesus should thus prominently be emphasised? This utterance of the Baptist is often brought forward as an instance of the completely unhistorical character of the Fourth Gospel. How could the Baptist have known that Jesus would die a violent death? This utterance is completely unlike any other utterance of his in the Synoptics. There his conception is that the Messiah is to come with fire and sword, and there is no thought of His death. It is also recorded that the Baptist is disappointed in the methods adopted by Jesus, later on in his ministry (Matt. xi. 2 ff.).

(b) Another supposed difficulty is that the Baptist here speaks of Jesus as "taking away the sins of the world." It is contended that he, with his narrower Jewish outlook, could not have had the idea that the death of Jesus was valid for all men. Undoubtedly the meaning here is that the death of Jesus is a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Seeley, in *Ecce Homo*, says that the Baptist meant by the term "Lamb of God" merely to designate Jesus as "One whose confidence had never been disturbed, whose steadfast peace no agitations of life had ever ruffled. He did obeisance to the royalty of inward happiness" (p. 7). This is quite insufficient to explain the term. It is by no means so improbable historically as it seems, that the Baptist should have known the mind of Jesus. They were related by birth, and must have had opportunity of conversation on the work of the Messiah. The Baptism of Jesus is assumed to be past, and Jesus must have known then, that death must be the ultimate and only result of His refusal to be a political Messiah. Twice the Baptist says, *I knew him not* (vv. 31, 33). These words would seem to refer to his own knowledge of Jesus at the time of the Baptism. The word for *know* is one which means a clear, direct insight into the nature of Jesus. The Baptist is represented as saying that he beheld the vision of the dove at the baptism, but yet did not *know* Jesus. His baptism with water was only the instrument, in the hand of God, for "manifesting" the Messiah to Israel

(v. 31).¹ The words of v. 34 would seem to imply that subsequent experience of Jesus, and intercourse with Him, had proved to John the truth of the vision. "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the son of God." The Greek perfects are simply emphatic presents. Also the words *He that sent me . . . Holy Spirit* (v. 33) seem to imply that God had now given him a fuller knowledge of Jesus.

(c) It is, however, a fruitless and unprofitable task to attempt to harmonise the Johannine account of the Baptist's testimony with that of the Synoptics, so far as chronological details are concerned. For example, Westcott says that it is probable that v. 29 marks the return of the Lord from the Temptation. The interpretation of the Gospels is only slowly being delivered from such harmonistic artificialities. It ought to be sufficient to recognise what is clearly stated in the Johannine account, that the Baptist's knowledge of Jesus and recognition of Him, dawned on his mind gradually. It should also be noticed that the Fourth Gospel differs from the other three, in stating that the dove was seen by the Baptist. Matthew and Mark describe it as a vision of Jesus only. Luke relates it as an objective fact that might be apparent to others. John suggests that the vision was seen by the Baptist; in characteristic fashion the vision of the dove is regarded as a transparency, through which there shines a truth. The dove is the symbol of peace and gentleness, a contrast to the Messiah at one time expected by the Baptist. Jesus is regarded as One on whom the Spirit descended, and "abode" or "remained." In another place the Evangelist says that God gave not the spirit "by measure" to Jesus (iii. 34). The meaning is that Jesus is distinguished from all other prophets and heroes of old, on whom the Spirit descended. On Him it abides, and His death sets it free for the whole world. Jesus alone, therefore, can baptise with the Holy Spirit.

v. 33.—What is meant by the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?

¹ The "Baptist" party in the Church would no doubt urge that, as John baptised Jesus, therefore John must be the greater. This verse is an answer to such a contention.

It is contrasted with the *water* baptism. The baptism with water symbolised the forsaking of the past manner of life, repentance ; it is negative. The Holy Spirit is the principle and motive-power of the new life in Christ, the issue of the second birth ; it is positive. We shall reserve until later the full treatment of the Evangelist's doctrine of the Spirit (Chapter XVI.).

“ It is probable that nearly all who think of conduct at all, think of it too much ; it is certain that we all think too much of sin. We are not damned for doing wrong, but for not doing right ; Christ would never hear of negative morality ; ‘ thou shalt ’ was ever His word, with which He superseded ‘ thou shalt not. ’ ”—R. L. STEVENSON.

“ Everywhere the negative and positive methods of treatment stand over against each other, and men choose between them. Here is a man who is beset with doubts perhaps about the very fundamental truths of Christianity. He may attack all the objections in turn, and at last succeed in proving that Christianity is not false. That is negative. Or he may gather about him the assurance of all that his religion has done and sweep away all his doubts with the complete conviction that Christianity is true. That is positive, and that is better.”—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

CHAPTER III

II. A.

2. The Growth of Faith in the Apostolic Circle, i. 35-ii. 22

Nathanael is mentioned only in this Gospel (*cf.* xxi. 2). It is possible that he may be identified with Bartholomew or Matthew. Matthew, like Nathanael, means "Gift of God."

In the study of this section two main divisions may be suggested.

(1) **The Calls of the Various Disciples** (i. 35-49).

(2) **The Growth of their Faith in Jesus** (i. 50-ii. 22), noting especially i. 51, 52 ; ii. 11 ; ii. 22. These verses mark stages in the growth.

(1) **The Various Calls** (*vv.* 35-42) : Andrew, Peter, and John. All these three are represented as disciples of the Baptist. Two of them, Andrew and John, are with the Baptist when Jesus meets them. He, for the second time, speaks of "the Lamb of God," and this time directs the disciples' attention to Jesus. The result is that, after an interview with Jesus, they profess their faith in Him as Messiah. Andrew, also, is instrumental in bringing his brother Peter (*v.* 41).

Is it not in direct contradiction to the Synoptic story that these disciples acknowledge Jesus as Messiah at their very first interview ? (*cf.* Matt. xvi. 13 ff. ; Mark viii. 27 ff. ; Luke ix. 18 ff.). In the Synoptic story this confession comes at a more developed stage of their experience of Jesus. Here, however, the disciples do not put the full content into the term "Messiah." As disciples of the Baptist, they were talking and thinking of little else, and now they have found One Who, on the authority of their Master, is the Messiah. Their idea was not purged of all

the earthly and material hopes that so persistently clustered round the conception of the Messiah in popular religious thought. Moreover, the Evangelist expressly states in *vv.* 50, 51 that their confession needs to be enlarged, and that a much fuller revelation of the person of Jesus has yet to be given them. Note particularly that the form of address in *v.* 51 is plural, as though the words were addressed to them all, "ye shall see," etc.

vv. 40-42.—**Andrew**, although not prominent, is an interesting character in the Gospel. He always plays a very subordinate part. He brings to Jesus one who is destined to play a much more leading part than he. There is nothing noteworthy about his call; but he seems to have been one to whom men turned instinctively in a moment of need or perplexity (*vi.* 8; *xii.* 22).

Simon. The prophecy of Jesus as to Simon's growth in character is much earlier here than in the Synoptics (*Matt.* xvi. 18). It is as though Jesus recognised his possibilities from the first. Simon is attracted to Jesus by His evident belief in him. Had Jesus special names, given almost playfully, for some of His disciples (*e.g.* "Boanerges," *Mark* iii. 17)? An indication of the happy relationships in the circle of Jesus' disciples.

vv. 43-49.—**Philip.** Note the other references to Philip in the Gospel (*vi.* 5; *xii.* 21; *xiv.* 8). Can we gather anything as to his character from these? Evidently of a practical turn of mind. He knows exactly how much it will cost to feed the large multitude; also in *xiv.* 8 he demands a direct proof of the Fatherhood of God. Yet even his heart is moved by an interview with Jesus.

Nathanael.—Nathanael's question must not be misunderstood. Nazareth was a village quite close to his own native place of Bethsaida. Because it was so near and he knew it so well, he cannot imagine that Messiah should come from it. It is narrow prejudice, and not a notion of any special wickedness in Nazareth that is his stumbling-block.

v. 47.—What is the meaning of Jesus' words to Nathanael? Apparently "Israelite" has some reference to Jacob's wrestling at Jabbok. Jacob was not without guile. Nathanael is; not in the sense that he is blameless, but that he is a

perfectly sincere man, wrestling with some religious difficulty. He is unlike the Jewish opponents of Jesus. His mental attitude is straight. Jesus knew that some crisis had been going on in Nathanael's soul. No doubt he had been praying, or thinking and reading "under the fig-tree." That means no more than just, "in the quiet of his own home." Nathanael's surprise is not that Jesus saw him there, but that He knew what was going on in his mind. "Whence knowest Thou me?" Nathanael is led to faith in Jesus by this experience of His wonderful, sympathetic, intuitive understanding of his mental struggle.

It will form an interesting topic to study the various ways in which these men are brought to faith in Jesus. Andrew and John, through their trust in the Baptist's judgment of Jesus, confirmed by their own experience; Peter, through his brother's faith; Philip, a practical man, dominated by the personality of Jesus, who in a masterful way says, "Follow Me"; Nathanael, by the discovery that his mental struggle, whatever it was, did not exclude him from the sympathy and knowledge of Jesus.

(2) **The Growth of the Faith of the Disciples** (i. 50-ii. 22). This section may present some difficulty, but not if we remember the method and the purpose of the Evangelist. His interest, as we have seen (*Introd.* pp. 8 f.), is not in history for itself. For him history is transparent. He selects events that will reflect the particular ideas he seeks to bring into prominence. What he still has in his mind is the attitude of these disciples to Jesus. He has told us of the beginnings of their faith. What did it grow to? and how? From this point of view, note carefully i. 50, 51; ii. 11; ii. 22. At each of these points a *stage* in the growth of their faith is marked.

(1) i. 50, 51.—Jesus tells Nathanael that his present faith is undeveloped, and that he will see "greater things than these." Then in symbolic language that recalls the vision of Jacob He tells him, and through him them all ("ye," *v.* 51), that they still have before them a vision that will gradually unfold itself. They will follow him, not only through cities and villages, and

along the roads, but to borrow a phrase of Wordsworth's, "in all the fluxes and refluxes of His thought" (*cf.* T. R. Glover, *The Nature and Purpose of a Christian Society*, pp. 46 ff.). As He went about with them and they heard Him talk, as He healed men, and gave to the lowliest and the most abandoned a hope and a sense of their own possibilities such as they never had before, the conviction would dawn upon them that the very presence and ministry of God Himself was revealed. That is really what is meant by the "open heaven" (note the Greek perfect (*ἀνεωγότα*); "open" and "remaining open"); and the "angels" or messengers "of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (*cf.* note on xx. 29).

(2) The *second* stage is described in ii. 1-11. True to his method, the Evangelist selects an incident, a sign, suitable for his purpose, in order to describe the impression made on these disciples by a miracle. "Jesus manifested His glory and His disciples believed on Him" (v. 11). In what way is this glory displayed in the incident at Cana so as to induce this trust in Him? We ought not to concern ourselves in this connection with the question of the supernatural in the miracle itself. That is matter for discussion in connection with the question of miracles in general. There can be no doubt that the Evangelist himself believes that it was an actual miracle, and that water was actually transformed into wine.

It may be pointed out that for the Biblical writers as a whole, the question of miracle presented no such difficulty as it does to the modern mind. They believed in the order of nature, but that order rested at every moment on the "word" or will of God. Hence to them it was quite intelligible that God could give special and unusual injunctions in order to carry out His plans. "No Israelite ever formed the idea of 'the abrogation of the laws of nature,' or of the violation of the cosmic order. It was understood that God had resorted to special measures; but the question was not raised whether these unusual events repeal the Divine order perceptible at other times. The Omnipotence of God is unlimited. No external power confronts Him" (Wendland, *Miracles and Christianity*, pp. 37-38. The whole chapter should be consulted).

It is remarkable that nothing is said in the account of this miracle of the *process* by which the miracle is accomplished. It is simply said that servants drew the liquid out of the vessels and it became wine. The Evangelist does not lay stress on the miracle as such. It is a sign. To what particular aspects of the character of Jesus does it call attention?

(a) It is probable that the Evangelist, looking back on the story, sees in it a symbolic meaning. He speaks of this as the "beginning" of miracles. Does he mean the first miracle that Jesus ever did? Mary's words to Jesus in *v.* 3 would seem to imply that He had done miracles before. Origen, in his commentary, interprets "beginning" as meaning that the miracle is first, not in point of time, but in point of significance. It is selected by the Evangelist, in accordance with his purpose (*xx.* 31), because it has a special primary significance for the person and work of Jesus. He came to turn the water of the Jewish ceremonial religion (note *v.* 6) into the wine of the Christian Gospel (*cf.* Luke *v.* 39).

(b) This miracle is always quoted as showing Jesus' sympathy with human joy, as typified by the marriage-feast. That is no doubt true, but Jesus is not represented as taking part in the feast. He is behind the scenes, where an ordinary commonplace anxiety as to ways and means has arisen, which He removes. Whether we regard the miracle as historical or not, it is a striking representation of the sympathy of Jesus. The people whom He helps are not always suffering notably; here they are in good health, but really anxious.

(c) For the significance of Jesus' strange words in *v.* 4, which have caused enormous difficulty, see pp. 151 ff. One aspect of the glory of Jesus is that He will not take suggestions for His life-work, even from His own mother. The word "woman" has no harsh sense (*cf.* p. 219).

(3) We now come to the *third* stage of faith, *ii.* 13-22. It is a standing difficulty of Johannine criticism to explain why the cleansing of the Temple is put where it is, apparently at the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry. The Synoptics all place it at the end. The key to its position at this part of

the Gospel is found in the fact that the Evangelist uses it merely to illustrate the third stage in the faith of the disciples. His purpose is not chronological, but is made apparent in *v.* 22, where he describes the full resurrection faith. It is not remarkable that the Evangelist should describe this incident solely for the sake of the words, "Destroy this temple," etc. In one form or another they played a considerable part in the trial of Jesus. They were used against Him at His trial (Matt. xxvi. 61; Mark xiv. 58). They were flung at Him mockingly on the Cross (Matt. xxvii. 40; Mark xv. 29). To John they were a prophecy of His death and resurrection. Their full significance was not understood until after the event. This full resurrection faith is one that is no longer dependent on the bodily presence of Jesus with them. (For a fuller treatment of this subject, see notes on Chap. XX.)

Complete and final faith involves (a) that they *believed the Scripture*. This refers to the various passages in the Old Testament that were regarded among the Jewish Christians as having their fulfilment in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

(b) That they *believed the word which Jesus spake unto them*. The "word" referred to may be either this saying, "Destroy this temple," etc; or His words in general about His own death and resurrection.

Additional Notes on ii. 13-22.

v. 14.—The animals were sold for sacrifice for the convenience of pilgrims. Gradually the dealers had come to have stalls within the outer precincts of the Temple. It is thought that Caiaphas and his colleagues had a direct pecuniary interest in the sales.

v. 15 (*cf.* Mark xi. 15-17; Matt. xxi. 12, 13; Luke xix. 45, 46).—It is interesting to note in comparison with the Synoptic accounts (1) That the "all" of the verse is made to refer only to sheep and oxen, and not to men. This Evangelist apparently tries to make it clear that Jesus did not use the scourge for human beings. (2) Jesus acts more mildly to the sellers of doves; and more drastically toward the money-changers.

v. 17.—No doubt this action of Jesus was criticised by Jews

in John's day as it is to-day. In reply, the Evangelist mentions a prophecy that his act seems to fulfil (Ps. lxi. 9). Is this an effective reply to-day, or would it satisfy only a contemporary question?

v. 18.—Jesus has assumed prophetic authority. He must now vindicate it by a sign from heaven (*cf.* vi. 30).

CHAPTER IV

II. A.

3. Nicodemus, the Pharisee, ii. 23-iii. 21

ii. 23-25 introduces the incident of Nicodemus, and links it up with what goes before by a general statement of public opinion about Jesus.¹ Note these points :—

1. *Belief on the mere ground of miracles, v. 23.* This kind of belief is elsewhere depreciated in this Gospel (*cf.* iv. 48). Why? It is one thing to believe that such things are possible and to render deference to Him who does them; it is another and higher thing to *experience* the power and love manifested in such miracles, working miracles in our own characters, and in the spiritual and moral progress of the world. The readers are being introduced to the crowning miracle of the second birth.

2. Note *v. 24* as an indication of the meaning of *believe*. Note the play upon the word *pisteuo* (*believe*). Translate, “many *trusted* in His name, beholding the signs which He did, but Jesus did not *trust* Himself to them.” *Pisteuo* is used to translate the Hebrew and Aramaic *âmān*, which may mean, in one of its forms, to “carry a child,” and in another, “to lean upon,” “trust.” This is suggestive for the meaning of “believe,” in this Gospel, where the abstract noun “faith” (*pistis*) does not occur.

3. We are also prepared in *vv. 24, 25* for a characteristic of the conversation that follows. “He himself knew what was in man.” Often we shall understand the sequences in *iii. 1 f.*

¹ In the proposed scheme of the construction of the Gospel, ii. 23-25 are assigned to **R.** (p. 59).

if we remember that Jesus is replying to unuttered thoughts of Nicodemus.

iii. 1-21.—The whole passage should be divided into two parts :—

(1) **Faith as Regeneration**, vv. 1-15.

(2) **Faith as Escape from Judgment**, vv. 16-21. The reflection of the Evangelist on what the conversation suggests about the person of Jesus as Judge.

(1) **Faith as Regeneration**, iii. 1-15.

v. 1.—Nicodemus is a *Pharisee*, and therefore more in touch with popular thought and movements. The Sadducees were the ecclesiastics (*cf.* Hastings' *DCG*, Art. *Pharisees and Sadducees*).

A ruler of the Jews, i.e. a member of the Sanhedrin.

v. 2.—*By night* implies, (1) Timidity and hesitation ; not sufficiently convinced to come out into the open. (2) Also an earnest desire for a private interview. It took place, not necessarily in a house, but perhaps in the open air, probably on the Mount of Olives. The "wind" spoken of in v. 8 might actually be touching his cheek at the moment.

Note here a characteristic of the Gospel (*Introd.* pp. 8 ff.). Nicodemus afterwards seems just to disappear. We do not know if he became a disciple (*cf.* vii. 50 ; xix. 39 ; also notes on xii. 20). The Evangelist is more interested in ideas than in history. The story of Nicodemus is just an opportunity to bring forward the idea of the second birth.

vv. 3, 4.—To Nicodemus Jesus is a Rabbi, "sent from God," because He works miracles. Why does Jesus give the apparently abrupt reply in v. 3 ? He is replying to what Nicodemus is thinking, or trying to say. "You, if any man, can tell me, how I shall enter the Kingdom of God ?" (*cf.* Mark x. 15-17, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life ?") Nicodemus is satisfied with Jesus' credentials as a Teacher or Prophet. This, however, is an inadequate view of His person.

Kingdom of God ; a term that has almost disappeared from this Gospel. Instead "Eternal life" is used. Note these points :—

(1) A better word than kingdom is "reign" or "sway"

of God. The general idea of the kingdom in Jewish thought is an assertion of the glorious sovereignty of God against the evil powers that now hold sway. This "kingdom" was regarded as still in the future, and men must wait patiently until God's set time is come. Yet men can so act in the present as to ensure for themselves a place in it. A new community is being formed, consisting of those who are "righteous," *i.e.* keep the Jewish law. The man who daily recites the *Shema* (*i.e.* Deut. vi. 4-9) is regarded, each time he repeats it, as "taking on himself the yoke of the sovereignty (or kingdom) of God" (Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, p. 97). Some such thought was in the mind of Nicodemus, the Pharisee. Jesus virtually says, "Yes. Not only does the future kingdom come from within, but the preparation for it also. This consists in an inward and personal transformation, a 'birth from above.'¹" Nicodemus seems to think that Jesus, as a new and accredited Teacher, "come from God," can tell him some new way of being righteous, and of entering the kingdom. Jesus replies that the capacity to enter it does not consist in "doing," but in "being." A man must become "a child of God." True righteousness must be the natural and spontaneous fruit of an inner life that bears it and produces it.

(2) The idea is another form of Jesus' words, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." A child is born, apart from his own will, into a world that is entirely new to him. So the child of God is born into a world where the love of God in Christ is a sovereign reality. "God so loved the world." This love of God is a reality on earth, in Jesus. The Pharisaic idea of God was that He weighed a man's merits or demerits according as the man did or did not keep the law. A man could never be sure of the love of God to himself. To the Christian, the love and forgiveness of God are the first facts in his experience.

(3) *Are Jesus and Nicodemus in the same world?* Yes, but they are not seeing the same world. "A cat may look at a

¹ The Greek may mean "a second birth," or a "birth from above." In any case the meaning is the same.

king," but, as some one has said, it is not a king that the cat sees. Think of the way in which the Pharisee looked upon the poor and sinful and outcast, and the way in which Jesus looked on them, and realise that their worlds were entirely different.

(a) Take the rich young Ruler (Mark x. 17 ff.). What a difference between his world and Christ's. It is noteworthy that in Mark these words about "becoming as little children" come immediately before this story (Mark x. 15). The world to which Jesus introduced him was one where new responsibilities were imposed, and a great sacrifice demanded, for the sake of the poor. Originally, his world was bounded by the precepts of the law. He is introduced to a world that is bounded only by his own capacity for sacrifice, and by the needs of others. Let a man be assured that God does love him; that Jesus died for him and therefore for all, and he is born into a different world. New responsibilities and sacrifices are demanded; new joys of service are opened up. For John, to believe in the reality of the revelation of God in Jesus is to be already *in the kingdom*. To see it is to enter it.

(b) We may also compare Jesus' words to Pilate (xviii. 37) about the kingdom of truth (see notes *in loco*). The kingdom of truth is another phrase for the kingdom of heaven—the kingdom of reality, the real world. In one sense it is not yet realised; in another it is being realised, as we come to look on our life social and individual, with its calls, responsibilities, duties, and claims upon us, in the light of the Gospel of Jesus, Who is the "light that lighteneth every man."

v. 4.—Nicodemus' reply is not merely a stupid one. It is wistfully and wilfully absurd. *Born when he is old!* all his habits of thought and life formed, and his attitudes fixed? A tremendous and impossible revolution!

v. 5.—*Born of water and of the Spirit*. A difficult verse. What does he mean by "water"? It is quite possible that in accordance with his style elsewhere the Evangelist gives a double meaning to the words.

1. He refers to Christian Baptism. Just as in the case of the Eucharist (chap. vi.) the Evangelist has in view, in his in-

terpretation of the conversation, a superstitious view of the sacrament of baptism. This he corrects by conjoining "water" and "spirit." Submission to the rite of baptism by itself cannot effect the new birth. There must be present not only the life-giving principle of the Spirit, but conscious experience of it on the part of the believer. Of course the reference is to adult baptism.¹ The believer must first have "seen the kingdom of God" in the person of Jesus. Thus the sacrament of baptism is psychologically conditioned, and is raised above the level of a magical, or quasi-physical communication of divine grace.

2. Water may also symbolise the fact of physical birth (see notes on xix. 34). In later Jewish thought, "water" is regarded as a creative element in the womb (2 Esdras viii. 8). Nicodemus is trusting to his physical descent from Abraham for his membership of the kingdom. As in viii. 31 ff., Jesus is combating the idea that the child of Abraham is *ipso facto* the child of God. It will be noted that this interpretation suits very well the curiously allusive character of the Evangelist's thinking. The general thought of the passage alternates between the ideas of physical and spiritual birth.

v. 6.—*That which is born of the flesh is flesh*, etc. Mere natural development, descent, environment, will not produce children of God (*cf.* i. 13).

v. 7.—At what is Nicodemus asked not to marvel? "Thee" is placed in a somewhat emphatic position, and the transition to the plural "ye" indicates that in Nicodemus a larger community is addressed, viz. the Jewish. It was a startling idea to a Jew by descent to be told that he must experience a second birth. That was a term applied to proselytes, admitted to Judaism from the Gentile world. These were described as "new-born" (*cf.* Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus Christ*, i. pp. 383; Ps. lxxxvii. 4-6).

¹ Infant baptism is not in question. In interpreting Scripture do not drag in questions that are irrelevant to the writer's mind at the moment.

In regard to the idea of "second birth," see *Introd.* pp. 46 ff. for a description of the term as employed in the Mystery-religions. It is quite possible that through the medium of the conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus' words are made to apply to the environment of religious thought created by the Mystery-religions.

v. 8.—Nicodemus is ready to believe in miracles (v. 2), except when they touch his own personal experience. He is brought face to face with a crowning miracle, the "second birth," effected by the Spirit. The Spirit's action is like that of the wind. You have no control over it, no knowledge of its "whence?" and "whither?" Yet its effect is real in your case. "Thou hearest the sound thereof." Sound is really "voice" (R.V.); an unusual word as applied to the "sound" of an inanimate object. We must remember, however, that the same word, *ruach*, is used in Hebrew and Aramaic for "wind," "breath," and for "spirit of God." The Greek *pneuma* can be similarly used. Hence, apparently, the use of the more personal term, "voice."

v. 9.—*How can these things be?* Nicodemus is already feeling the power of Jesus in his heart, but he is ignorant of any cause that can produce such an effect.

v. 10.—"*Art thou the teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?*" Was not the Spirit of the Lord in Hosea, and Amos, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah? Did not the Spirit lay hold of these men, apart from their own choice? Had Nicodemus not read these and expounded them? (*cf.* Ezek. xxxvii. 1). May a teacher not himself remain untaught?

vv. 11-15 may be taken as a massing of the evidence for the answer to Nicodemus' question, "How can these things be?" The dialogue passes insensibly into a monologue.

This evidence consists in—

(1) v. 11.—*The testimony of Christian experience.* "We speak that we do know." Swift transference from the actual to the contemporary situation, in the use of "we"; Jesus unites with the Church of the Evangelist's time in His testimony. No clearer instance can be found of the way in which the Evan-

gelist hears Jesus speak in the post-Resurrection "witness" of the Spirit of truth.

(2) *v. 12.*—*The analogy of "earthly things," i.e. wind and physical birth, of which Jesus has been speaking. Both are independent of the individual action or comprehension.*

(3) *v. 13.*—*The person of Jesus Himself.*

(a) *As Revealer of heavenly secrets or mysteries;* but in this case the mystery of heaven is the open mystery of the Love of God (*cf. v. 16*).

(b) *v. 14.*—*As Redeemer of the world on the Cross.* The brazen serpent was raised up that all might see it. So the Cross is the setting free of the Spirit, accessible to all. "The Spirit was not yet, for Jesus was not yet glorified" (vii. 39). Read the verse as in R.V.

There is no intricate typology here (*cf. viii. 28; xii. 32, 34*). We should note that the crucifixion of Jesus is compared with the lifting up of the brazen serpent only in one point, its *visibility to all*. The look brought life (*cf. Num. xxi. 8, 9, and John vi. 40*). To "see" the glorified Jesus is to believe, and to have eternal life. There is here, also, no theory about the death of Jesus. Like Paul, the Evangelist has seen the preaching of the Cross in its *effects*. It is "the power of God unto salvation."

(2) *iii. 16-21.*—**Faith as escape from Judgment.**

v. 16.—Here the comment or reflection of the Evangelist begins. Is it a difficulty that *v. 16* should be regarded as the Evangelist's own words? Which is the more wonderful supposition—that Christ actually spoke these very words, or that the Evangelist spoke them as the fruit of the experience of say seventy years?

v. 17.—The Evangelist sees, as a matter of fact, that the coming of Jesus is really a judgment on men. Just as a man is judged by his opinion of a picture, a book, or a man, so men are judged, divided into two classes, by their opinion of Jesus. The Pharisee's idea of a judgment was the future one, when God would separate the righteous and the wicked.

The Evangelist hastens to say that it is not the primary pur-

pose of God to "judge" (v. 17 R.V.) the world. The primary purpose of the sun is not to cast shadows, but as a matter of fact it does.

v. 18.—The Pharisaic doctrine was that God, even now, was judging men according to their attitude to the Law, and that judgment would finally be declared when the kingdom was consummated. This is what they meant by "righteousness." The impossibility of attaining this "righteousness according to the Law" was the cause of Paul's wretchedness before his conversion (Rom. vii. 24). Afterwards he feels that he is justified or "acquitted" through his knowledge of the person and work of Jesus. The relationship between God and himself has altered. It is no longer that of Judge and accused, but of Father and child. John here expresses Paul's thought in his own way; "He that believeth on Him is not being judged."

He that believeth not hath been judged already because he hath not believed, etc. (R.V.). The Final Judgment at the Last Day is just a declaration or manifestation of a process that is already going on in the lives of men (*cf.* Drummond, *CAFG*, pp. 172 ff.).

v. 19.—*Men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil*. John is not thinking especially of Nicodemus, who came by night. He has forgotten Nicodemus in the thought of the enemies of Jesus, and especially of the Jewish nation who rejected Him. John simply cannot understand why men do not believe in Jesus. To him, it is like refusing to see when the sun shines.

vv. 20, 21.—These concluding verses may sound harsh; they are at least very decisive. Remember (1) that the Evangelist is thinking of insincere men, of those who "do not the truth." "To do the truth" is to aim at reality in the first place as regards ourselves. We must think of ourselves as we really are, if all secrets were known; and of others as they really are. The people of Jericho thought they knew the real Zacchæus. Jesus knew better, and laid hold of the real man, with all his desires and possibilities for good (Luke xix. 1-10). The real Zacchæus is lost and found. He responds to Jesus at once. The "truth"

regarding ourselves and others is best displayed in the light of Jesus' presence and character. Comparison with other men and human standards tells us nothing "real."

To say of vice, what is it?
Of virtue, we can but miss it,
Of sin, we can but kiss it,
And 'tis no longer sin,

is not "to do the truth." It is unreality, an attitude untrue to the ultimate distinction between right and wrong.

(2) We must also aim at reality, as regards Jesus Himself. Many who think they cannot believe to-day, even in our own land, have never really had Jesus, as He really is, presented to them. They think of Him through a mist of theological doctrine, or ecclesiastical prejudice, or outworn theories of the inspiration of the Bible, or bare external authority. Only sincere and fearless thought and study, especially of the Gospels, undertaken reverently, prayerfully, and under competent guidance, can alter this. Only then will His words and example, appreciated in their original historical setting, become forces that operate on mind and conscience and will. When they confront us, it is not enough to ponder them. They are too urgent for that. The "truth" they reveal is one that must be done, or left undone. How much unbelief in Jesus, if we are to be honest with ourselves, is due not to mental perplexity at all, but to a perfectly clear and deliberate moral judgment; to the tremendous demand He makes on our lives, to a sense of the needs and rights of others as interpreted by Him, and to our own refusal of discomfort and sacrifice?

Words and an Example that are so insistent and compelling, so enlightening, quickening, purifying, cannot be mere survivals of the First Century. They must still be the expression of a Personality that is alive. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light."¹

vv. 22-30 have been included under chap. II. The dispute

¹ Cf. P. Carnegie Simpson, *The Fact of Christ*, pp. 78 ff.

about the purifying is connected with baptism, and we do not know exactly what form it would take. It is introduced only to give the Baptist the opportunity of declaring again his subordination to Jesus. The disciples of John endeavour to rouse in their master jealousy of Jesus. Probably the dispute was as to whether Jesus' baptism or John's was the more effective.

vv. 31-36 are a comment and reflection of the Evangelist. All the ideas are met with elsewhere, in other parts of the Gospel. They are suggested by the Baptist's words in *vv.* 27-30.

CHAPTER V

II. A.

Examples of Faith outside the Jewish Nation.

4. The Woman of Samaria ; and the Nobleman's Son, iv. 1-54

The Woman of Samaria, iv. 1-42

The Evangelist is still dealing with the attitude of individuals towards Jesus. The whole narrative of this incident, vivid and life-like as it is, is really meant not to give a portrait of the woman, so much as a description of what Jesus can do. Just as Nicodemus gradually disappears, and the dialogue passes into a monologue, so this woman leaves her waterpot behind and disappears (*vv.* 28), and the story of a great religious movement in Samaria is told (*vv.* 30-42). Here, again, we must not miss the apologetic intention of the Evangelist. A saying like Matt. x. 5, if it stood alone, might imply that the Samaritans were not to be evangelised. Luke ix. 51-56 mirrors the intensity of the feeling that separated Jew and Samaritan in our Lord's time ; it also shows how, within the apostolic band, Jesus sought to change the accepted attitude. The R.V. puts in the margin the words, "and said . . . save them," which only makes the narrative more vivid. All is said, that needs to be said in the words, "They went unto another village." They imply a marvellous, silent patience, and power of waiting on the part of Jesus. The Fourth Evangelist understood them as he wrote chap. iv. Luke alone preserves for us the attitude of Jesus towards two Samaritans (x. 33 ; xvii. 16).

Even at the time he wrote, it was necessary thus to emphasise what Jesus felt about Samaritans. In this chapter of the Fourth Gospel the altered feelings of the Christian Church are very apparent. It is the story of the death of a stubborn national prejudice, and a fruit of the Resurrection of Jesus, that a Samaritan woman should thus be described as one of the first Christian Evangelists to her own people. (For an account of the History and Religion of the Samaritans the article in Hastings' *DCG*, vol. ii., may be consulted.)

The incident may be thus divided :—

1. **Introduction**, vv. 1-6 (of which probably vv. 1-3 belong to R.).

2. **The Conversation**, vv. 7-26.

3. **The Missionary Joy of Jesus**, vv. 27-38.

4. **Mediate and Immediate Faith**, vv. 39-42.

1. **Introduction**, vv. 1-6.

v. 1.—*The Lord*; an unusual title for Jesus in this Gospel (*cf.* vi. 23; xi. 2; xx. 2, 28; xxi. 7). In all the other instances of its use in the Gospel it means simply, "Sir." The thought of the verse connects itself with iii. 22. The writer is anxious to show that Jesus was not a rival to the Baptist (see Chap. II.).

v. 2.—*Though Jesus . . . His disciples*. An apparent contradiction to iii. 23, which is intelligible if vv. 1-3 are the work of R. It may be that among the readers baptism had come to be regarded in a superstitious way; and perhaps the idea had sprung up that some kind of mystical connection was formed between the baptiser and the baptised, apart from moral conditions (*cf.* Paul's words in 1 Cor. i. 14, 15). But the interpretation is very uncertain.

v. 5.—*Sychar*; generally identified now with Askar, at the foot of Mt. Ebal, about half a mile north of Jacob's well. *The parcel of ground*; see Gen. xxxiii. 19.

v. 6.—*Wearied with His journey*—the humanity of Jesus is strongly emphasised in the Fourth Gospel. Why? *cf.* xi. 35; xix. 28; see pp. 18 ff. *Thus*; perhaps = *as he was* (*cf.* xiii. 25). "What meaneth 'thus'?" Not on a throne, not on a cushion, but simply, as he was, on the ground" (Chrysostom).

The sixth hour. The Jews began the 24 hours at 6 p.m. Night extended from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., and day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. (*cf.* i. 39 ; iv. 52 ; xix. 14). Thus the time would be twelve noon. (See Westcott's note, *Commentary*, p. 282.)

2. *The Conversation*, vv. 7-26.

v. 7.—*There cometh a woman of Samaria.* A chance meeting, as we should say ; yet, with all the familiar surroundings, the most memorable day of her life.

Give me to drink. His request is spontaneous and real, and with no concealed didactic intention. This is clearly shown by the practical statement of v. 8.

v. 8.—*The city* ; rather the " town " of Sychar.

v. 9.—This is banter on her part. She seizes the opportunity to tease a thirsty man, who is obviously, out of sheer need, compelled to break through the legal enactment that forbade a Jew to take food or drink from a Samaritan. His dress or accent betray His nationality. *Of me, a woman of Samaria*, rather, *of me, a woman, and a Samaritan !*

v. 10.—The note of religious controversy has been struck. The woman is one of those whose hold on religion is a slender one, *viz.* a knowledge that divisions exist among religious people. Note one word specially in Jesus' reply, " free gift." It is a regal word, used of the benefactions of a king. The magnitude of the gift stills controversy. " The peasant of Asia Minor to-day calls almost every spring ' Huda-verdi ' or ' God hath given ' "

Who it is. The gift and the Giver are one ; but the appearance of the Giver did not suggest this.

Living water—words conveying, in the true Johannine style, a *double entente*. Here is also the point of attachment—water—with the woman's actual thoughts (*cf.* v. 15). Jesus has no stock methods or fixed formulas. He can speak of hens, candles, ploughs, garments, children. The woman's life was largely occupied in drawing water. Her heart was tired and her life drab ; He read it all in her face. Jesus, without any sense of the unusual, instinctively and spontaneously bursts two strongly entrenched social prejudices : (1) Race prejudice ;

(2) That a Rabbi should not talk with a woman.¹ Jesus did the greatest things with splendid ease.

If thou knewest. The woman is on the verge of a tremendous discovery, and cannot make it. The situation is dramatic.

v. 11.—Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, etc. Apparently stupid; really, like the similar question of Nicodemus, an attempt to conceal what she felt. His thought was confusing. His sympathy and pity were unmistakable and she resented them as patronage. It would be quite in the Johannine manner to conceal yet another meaning behind such words; the "well" is none other than her own "self" (see under *v. 14*).

v. 12.—Art Thou greater, etc. There is a copious fountain in Askar. It flows down the valley, only a few rods from Jacob's well. Why did the woman pass it over and prefer Jacob's well? Owing to "the fondness of the tradition which . . . drew Jacob's fanatic children to its scantier supplies" (G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of Palestine*, p. 374). Note that both in *v. 11* and *v. 12* the woman uses a different word from that translated "well" in *v. 1*, which is the spring itself. Here it is a made well—the artificial pit of masonry constructed with labour and cost. Jesus uses "spring" in *v. 14*. The contrast is not accidental. The suggestion of a "spring" brought an offer of clean freshness to the woman that sounded almost like mockery.

vv. 13, 14.—Shall never thirst. Very emphatic; "shall never thirst—never!"

In him a spring of water, leaping up into eternal life. Note the emphasis on the woman's personality. She has sought self-expression in her affections (*cf. v. 16*), and she has thoughtlessly allowed them to centre on unworthy objects. They have "sprung up" only to lose themselves in an empty home

¹ It is hardly fair to quote sporadic utterances from Jewish literature about the capacities or status of women, any more than to quote utterances of this kind to-day, as an indication of the real place that women occupied in society. They were, however, interdicted from Rabbinical study, and no Rabbi would be so forgetful of his dignity as to raise questions of religion with a woman.

and a weary heart. She feels that in the present condition of things, brought about through the tragedy of her own experience, she cannot express herself. Yet the well is still deep. She longs for the old freshness and spontaneity of love (*v.* 15). Her whole attitude breathes satiety and disappointment which are themselves a tribute to her inherent nobleness. Hence the graciousness of the message of Christ. Beneath the outward jadedness of spirit He seeks her real self. "In him, a spring of water." Only in a life lived in conscious communion with God, Who gave it, can we find the perfect and eternal expression of all our capacities. "Leaping up into eternal life" is a vivid picture of what happens in the Christian life. An inexhaustible spring of energy, power, hope, and love, produces actions that can never die or be destroyed. Their goal is not the grave, but "eternal life." They do not fall back to earth and sink in, like the water of an ordinary fountain. What a picture of the possibilities of a human heart that is more like a frozen lake at the moment!

v. 15.—The *real* woman speaks here. Compare the difference in her tone with that at the opening of the conversation. She would willingly be doing other things than drawing water. Ministry to sheer physical need, her own and others', is her present environment. How gladly would she go beyond it!

v. 16.—*Go, call thy husband.* A dramatic moment. The words do not seem to follow from the rest of the conversation. They do follow, if we remember Jesus' unerring insight. He had gone deep; He must go deeper. There is an actual cause in her own conduct for her state of mind expressed in *v.* 15.

v. 17.—Remember that divorce was common, and often practised on slight pretexts; and do not identify the woman's sin with sheer sordidness. A man might divorce his wife for incompatibility of temperament, or even for singeing his dinner!

v. 18.—*In that saidst Thou truly*; lit. "This—a real word—thou hast spoken." Jesus calls her confession of sin a *real* utterance. Confession, if it is to be real, is drawn from us not merely by consequences, but by the presence of Jesus, and in-

stinctive comparison of our lives with His. In that atmosphere only the real can have a place. The consequences in this woman's case failed to produce confession. Jesus succeeded. In *v.* 28 the woman says that Jesus told her "all things" that ever she did. Is this exaggeration? Is it not rather an illustration of the profound truth that to sin in any direction affects the whole personality? (*cf.* Jas. ii. 10).

v. 19.—*A prophet.* Insight, rather than foresight, is the chief characteristic of the prophets.

v. 20.—The woman is not really changing the subject. She still feels that the outward divisions of religion are perplexing, and that Jesus is likely to solve the difficulty. But her conscience is touched, and she has a common basis with Jesus. This is the only basis on which such discussion of differences can profitably proceed. She is half querulous, and half serious, as though she said, "To which church ought I to belong?" She is, however, still obsessed by the idea that church-going, in itself, has a certain merit and moral value.

vv. 21-24.—It is important to understand what this passage means, and what it does *not* mean.

1. It does *not* mean that outward forms of worship are unimportant. They are as important as the conceptions of God that lie behind them. Are these contradictory? Jesus contrasts the Samaritan worship with the Jewish. The Jew has, throughout his history, possessed the true knowledge of God (*v.* 22, R.V.). Just as the Roman mind has been the channel along which the conception of law has come to the world, and the Greek has been the channel of science, the Jew was chosen to be the channel of the knowledge of God. Jesus Himself was a Jew, and His crowning revelation of God as Father was only possible because of the progressive revelation of God in Jewish history: "Salvation is of the Jews." "Salvation," in the Christian sense, is far more a positive than a negative term. It does not mean deliverance from certain penal consequences hereafter, but rather a sense of security, manifested in joy and peace and triumph, in the presence of the hostile elements in life. It is the knowledge of God, in the highest

sense. It is the abolition of "fear" (*cf.* 1 John iv. 18). "We love, because He first loved us." Jesus does not condemn the outward forms of worship as such, either at Gerizim or at Jerusalem. The Samaritans never knew God, because they did not accept the teaching of prophets like Hosea and Isaiah and Jeremiah, and had had no share in the history of Israel. They were satisfied with the God who gave legal enactments in the Pentateuch. The Jews of Jesus' day had obscured the teaching of the prophet by the teaching of the priest and rabbi, but in their scriptures and in their history, rightly understood, they possessed the true knowledge of God (*cf.* v. 39, and the frequent references to the fulfilment of Scripture in the life and words of Jesus).

2. The passage does mean that "the rival claims of Gerizim and Jerusalem are not determined by the Lord; for they vanish in the revelation of a universal religion" (Westcott). And universality, which on its inner side is "unity," is not determined by outward conformity of worship, but by the conception of God that we have, and of the kind of salvation we look for. At first sight, it seems strange that in the presence of the woman's perplexity regarding the rival forms of worship, Jesus should appear to be adding to her difficulty by defining God as "Spirit," and as "Father." "No good can be accomplished till we recognise that our differences do not concern the Church, but the doctrines of God and of salvation upon which our views of the Church rest. Arguments about the Church can only end in barren logomachies, so long as we are not at one about what manner of God we believe in, and what manner of salvation we expect from Him" (J. Oman, *The Church and the Divine Order*, p. 3).

Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem. At the time this Gospel was written, the temples at Gerizim and at Jerusalem were in ruins. This historical fact undoubtedly has its influence on the Evangelist's expansion of Jesus' thought.

v. 23.—*God is Spirit*, R.V.—in opposition to "flesh." Every religion that is *essentially* dependent on conditions of time and place, orders and attitudes, rites and ceremonies, formal

creeds, is still of the flesh. In an unexpected way, neither in a church, nor through a priest, but through this Stranger, as yet unknown to her, God manifests Himself as Spirit. We ought all to feel our respective Churches too small to contain God (*cf.* 1 Kings viii. 27). God makes Himself known here in a sanctuary which He has made for Himself, the sacred shrine of her own heart. That is the meaning of the imperial note in Christ's words. Only "The Father" would seek to enter a heart like hers, or ours. The real basis, both of universal religion and of unity, is the sense that an individual soul can deal directly with God, without any intervening medium of creed, or locality, or rite. Creeds, buildings, rites must be the outward expression of a common inward experience, or they are meaningless. "God is Spirit."

They that worship . . . in spirit, and in truth. What is meant by the "true worshipper"?

(1) To worship in *spirit* is to worship in a region where God and my soul are in real contact, as a child with a father. It is into this region that Jesus translates us, by giving us "power to become children of God."

(2) To worship in *truth* is just another side of the same experience. Filial trust and obedience are not expressed in utterance, or in inward experience only, but in action. In what we call "real" life, often so terribly unreal, we have to be true to what we have come to know of God. If we love God, we must love our brother also (*cf.* 1 John i. 6, 7; ii. 4-6; iii. 18). Ideally, there should be no divorce between work and worship. We should "live more nearly as we pray."

vv. 25, 26.—Jesus appears to have gone somewhat beyond her capacity to follow. She looks to the future for the solution of her perplexities. *I know that when Messiah cometh, He will tell us all things, i.e.* make every difficulty plain. The Samaritans regarded Messiah not as a political reformer or king, but as one who would renew the Gerizim worship. The woman almost seems to return to her earlier perplexity about rival forms of worship. She struggles in vain to get beyond her conception of external worship, and sees only dimly, though

wistfully. She speaks as though the difficulties she feels might still wait for solution on a future day "when Messias cometh." Jesus again recalls her to Himself, and to the words He has been uttering. *I that talk with thee am Messiah.* He will not allow her to hold the questions raised at arm's-length. He virtually reminds her that the conversation had already roused within her hopes and longings that clamoured for immediate satisfaction. Briefly, His words had (1) made her feel how intense her thirst was, and how vain her attempts to quench it from other springs; (2) raised within her the deepest need of all, a sense of sin, and at the same time had given her a vision of God, as Father, yearning for her. Jesus' final answer to her is not mere bare assertion. It is a *résumé* of her own experience at the well-side, and the claim must be verified in that experience. She is not quite satisfied, and yet, very rightly, she is immediately found inviting the co-operation of the experience of her friends (*v.* 29). She cannot verify her experience alone. Did the effect on the Samaritan village lead her to complete certainty? Can we be sure of Christ's claim, unless we take into account and interest ourselves in what He is doing all around us?

3. The Missionary Joy of Jesus, *vv.* 27-38.

v. 27.—Notice to translate, as in R.V., *a woman*.

Yet no man said, etc. An indication not only of their respect but also of their awe of Him. Did they see a look on His face, as in Mark x. 32, the reflection of the glowing sense of a mission that burned within?

v. 28.—*Left her waterpot.* Life had now become greater than a mere circle of drudgery and routine. She has forgotten her object in coming to the well.

v. 29.—See on *v.* 18.

v. 31.—Note how all the details of the story are arranged so as to emphasise the missionary joy in the heart of Jesus. The disciples ask Him to eat. He refuses food (*v.* 32). He also has forgotten His weariness and hunger in the satisfying of another's need. It is an extraordinary picture of the complete absorption of Jesus in what is happening in Samaria.

v. 34.—Jesus is Himself refreshed (*cf. v. 6*).

v. 35.—*Say not ye*, etc. The reference is probably to some proverbial expression, meaning that the corn is still in the blade, and there is yet time before harvest. It is a proverb recommending delay, as against untimely haste. What is the application here? Jesus sees the Samaritans coming towards Him, and expresses what He sees in their coming in the words, "Lift up your eyes . . . already unto harvest." The harvest is *come*.

This is a typical Johannine passage. The immediate historical situation is forgotten, and we feel that Jesus is speaking to the Church as it was in the Evangelist's day. As we read *v. 38*, for example, we recognise that those addressed can only be the earliest preachers of the Gospel, already engaged in their mission. They need stimulus and encouragement. It is given in two ways: (1) By emphasising the way in which Jesus saw, in the elementary faith of the Samaritan villagers, and in the response of the Samaritan woman, not only seedtime but harvest. We, like them, are often too dilatory, and too faithless to reap what harvest of results we have. Even one soul roused like that of the Samaritan woman is not only a sowing, but a harvest. We must reap what we have. In *v. 36*, "He that soweth" is Jesus, and those who reap are His missionaries. The corn of wheat is cast into the ground, and in dying brings forth fruit (*xii. 24*). The harvest is not only "the end of the world," but now. The joy of Jesus over small results must be shared by His disciples. The proverb quoted in *v. 35* may, if wrongly used, lead to nothing being achieved. (2) By quoting another proverb in *v. 37*. Proverbs are very often half-lies. This one has a *true* side to it. *Herein is this saying true*. In its original sense it might easily be cynical and despairing in tone (*cf. Job xxxi. 8*). Yet it is true in the sense that the full results we seek will be reaped by those who come after us.

4. Mediate and Immediate Faith, *vv. 39-42*.

We are brought back, for a brief moment, to the history. The Evangelist is again dealing with his favourite

theme of "faith." He emphasises how the Samaritans passed from belief on the ground of the woman's testimony to a higher faith, based on their own experience of the Word of Christ. Every Christian missionary knows the thrill of the knowledge that someone to whom he has been sent, has ceased to trust his human utterance alone, and has learned to trust Christ Himself.

The Nobleman of Capernaum, iv. 43-54

v. 44.—Jesus Himself testified (*cf.* Matt. xii. 57 ; Luke iv. 24). Note how the context of the saying (also the *form* of the saying) is different in Matthew and in Luke. Here it is applied in yet another context. There is, however, a serious difficulty in the use of the words here. It looks as though the Evangelist regarded Judea, and not Galilee, as the "country" of Jesus, which of course is wrong. No satisfactory explanation can be given. The most probable suggestion is that the editor of the Gospel has inserted *vv.* 43-46 to "make the water wine"; in accordance with his plan of linking up the two incidents chronologically, which are already connected as illustrating types of faith outside the Jewish community. (See pp. 54 ff.).

v. 46.—Nobleman, rather "courtier," attached to the court of Herod Antipas. The story here is another form of the story in Matt. viii. 5-13 ; Luke vii. 1-10.

Son—he is called *pais* (= "slave" or "son") in Matthew and *doulos* (= slave) in Luke.

v. 47.—Come down—the road from Cana to Capernaum is a descent to the lake-side—a touch of great exactness.

v. 48.—Except ye see, etc. ; a damping utterance, that seems strange in view of the Synoptic account of the man's humility. We must remember, however, that the Fourth Evangelist permits himself great freedom in the application of the words of Jesus in various contexts. Also, he is judging the man's faith from the standpoint of the Resurrection faith (see pp. 87 f.). Belief on account of miracles, to him is always an inferior stage of faith. The man is warned against it.

v. 49.—The rebuke calls forth this very real cry from the father's heart.

v. 50.—The result is that the boy is healed, without Jesus taking any journey to Capernaum. *The man believed the word that Jesus spake*—a much higher stage of faith than is exhibited in v. 47.

v. 51.—In Luke the officer does not come to Jesus in person, but sends "elders of the Jews" instead, and subsequently a deputation of friends. Here he is met by some of his own slaves with the good news.

Do not attempt to harmonise these details where they conflict with the Synoptics. Although the Gospels undoubtedly contain the evidence of eye-witnesses, they must also be dependent on oral and written tradition. Even the "eye-witnesses" did not see everything, and the disciples must have left Jesus alone sometimes. As has often been said, John is only concerned to use the history in order to illustrate the attitude of men to Jesus. Here the man's faith progresses from stage to stage.

We have now finished the Evangelist's study of the attitude of individuals towards Jesus. In the next section we enter upon the attitude of the nation as a whole—the more public ministry, and the conflict between belief and unbelief. Individuals, like the man at Bethesda and the man born blind, are mentioned, but their story always ends in public conflict or controversy with the authorities.

CHAPTER VI

II. B.

The Conflict between Faith and Unbelief, v. i-xii. 36.

I. Developed under a Series of Topics

(1) The Divinity of Jesus, introduced by the Bethesda story,
v. 1-47.

In this chapter, for the first time, we are introduced to a discourse of Jesus, which is at the same time a controversy (*cf. Introd.* pp. 2 ff.). It heralds the conflict between Faith and Unbelief. This conflict is developed under a series of topics, all of which were also living questions of the Evangelist's own day. His primary purpose is not to give an account of a miracle of healing, but to use that miracle story as a vehicle for teaching certain truths about the Divinity of Jesus.

The man at Bethesda, vv. 1-9.

v. 2.—*There is in Jerusalem.* Note the present tense. Jerusalem was, by the time the Gospel was published, in ruins. Evidently the Evangelist is either describing his own vivid recollection, or he is making use of a story which he obtained through oral or written tradition. All depends on the view taken of the authorship of the Gospel.

(vv. 3, 4.—Note that part of v. 3, and the whole of v. 4 are omitted in the R.V. They are undoubtedly, according to the best MS. authority, later additions, perhaps written on the margin and thus having crept into the text.)

v. 6.—Jesus selects the most hopeless case of all.

Wouldst thou be made whole? Imagine the weakening effect

on the desire for health of an illness lasting so long, and of the man's repeated disappointments. Imagine also the compassion and sense of power in Jesus, that led Him to count upon a desire that seemed to be dead.

v. 7.—Within a few feet of what he believed would heal him, and yet unhealed, for want of a friendly hand. The spring was an intermittent one, and what the man believed is, no doubt, correctly stated in v. 4.

(1) His experience is like the experience of those who feel themselves caught in the wheels of the world. Sin brings its inevitable consequences; or nobody cares; or they have met with constant misfortune; or they are intellectually unable to see anything stronger than the natural laws of science. Such bondage may extend to will, heart, and mind. The Christian message is that no case is hopeless, and the love of Christ can accomplish even the impossible.

(2) The porches, or colonnade under which the sick lay, were perhaps the gift of some generous benefactor. But there are needs and cases which no mere social compassion or reform can deal with. Environment means much—infinitely much—for good or evil. Think what his environment meant for this man, before and after Jesus entered into it. "Bethesda" meant "House of mercy" or "compassion." It would have a new significance for him. We talk too much about social and other "problems," and forget that their constituents are living, individual men and women. Jesus never forgot this. The man's bed, and the porches, and the useless sight of a healing pool had been his environment for many a day. Through Jesus he obtains strength to shoulder the first, and to walk out of "Bethesda," to take his place in the world again—a picture of restored manhood.

The Discourse, vv. 10-47.

vv. 10-18.—Jesus joins issue with the Jews on the question of the Sabbath. The man is transgressing the law of Moses.

Note: (1) *The man's defence, v. 11.* "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk." In other words: one who has this power of healing has the

right also to modify the Sabbath law, as laid down by Moses.

(2) *Corroborated by Jesus, v. 17.* "My Father worketh hitherto ["even until now," R.V.], and I work." The Father's work has been uninterrupted, viz., of sustaining His creation. So Jesus' work cannot be interrupted by legalism. In the first and second centuries A.D. the Rabbis reflected upon the difficulty of reconciling the unbroken activity of God with His resting after the six days of creation. Their solution was that there is a distinction between creating "out of nothing," and sustaining creation !

Jesus' words imply a claim "to be equal with God." He called God "His own Father" (R.V.). He speaks of God not as "our Father," but as "My Father," and claims that His healing activity is identical with the activity of God in sustaining creation.

The whole of the rest of the controversy turns on the question of the Divinity of Jesus. One characteristic of the Johannine discourses is their *repetition*. They return again and again to the same idea. Consequently there is difficulty in getting exact divisions. Roughly, the remaining portion of the discourse may be divided as follows :—

1. Jesus' vindication of His own Divinity, vv. 19-29.
2. His statement of the various directions in which corroborative witness is borne to the fact, vv. 30-47.

1. Jesus' Vindication of His Divinity

(1) **The witness of His own self-consciousness, vv. 19-29.** He is not merely Messiah, but "*the Son of God.*"

v. 19.—*The Son can do nothing of Himself.* This seems to teach the subordination of Jesus to God. Is it not a contradiction to say that Jesus is subordinate to, dependent on God, while all the time He is equal with God ? We are only concerned with the Johannine interpretation, not with the general question.

John's usual expression for this aspect of the consciousness

of Jesus is "doing the will of God." "What things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner" (v. 19).

We may best see what is meant,

(a) By comparing the following passages :—

"My meat is to do the will¹ of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work" (iv. 34).

"The Father *loveth* the Son, and *sheweth* Him all things that Himself doeth" (v. 20).

"The Son can do nothing . . . but what He *seeth* the Father doing" (v. 19).

"I do nothing of Myself, but as My Father hath *taught* Me, I speak these things" (viii. 28).

"And the things which I *heard* from Him, these speak I unto the world" (viii. 26).

"I can of Myself do nothing : as I *hear*, I judge" (v. 30).

Note all these various expressions for the relationship between Jesus and God. They are in terms of *human* faculties and capacities. Jesus does not dissociate Himself from common human experience in this unique relationship. "He that doeth the will . . . the same is My mother, and sister," etc. (Matt. xii. 50). He is really and truly akin to the human race, really "became flesh."

(b) By noting the remarkable fact that Jesus nowhere in His reply says, "I am God." He says in x. 30, "I and the Father are one thing." Jesus' claim is perfectly to represent the character of God. "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." At the same time, as the other passages show He speaks as though His knowledge, will, and power are all derived from God.

This is the raw material for *speculation* on the Divinity of Jesus. The Fourth Evangelist would have no difficulty in getting his readers to believe in Incarnation as a general fact. Greek religion has many stories of gods becoming men, like Hinduism to-day. Ultimately there is no other first-hand evidence for the Divinity of Jesus than (1) His own self-con-

¹ This conception of dependence on God's will runs all through the Gospel; cf. ii. 4; vii. 8; xi. 5, 6 (see notes on the last passage).

sciousness. He is never conscious for a moment of transgressing the Will of God (*cf.* Mackintosh, *PJC*, pp. 36 ff.)¹

(2) The experience of the Apostolic Church, and that experience repeated throughout the ages. They experienced, through the presence of Jesus, results in heart and life that God alone could accomplish.

(2) **This sense of Divinity is vindicated by its expression in works** (*vv.* 21-29), like the work of healing that has gone before, and in *greater works* (*v.* 20). The "greater works" are, of course, the achievements of the Apostolic Church. After his fashion, the Evangelist suddenly moves from the actual historical situation to the contemporary situation. They are no longer the Jews of Jerusalem who are disputing about the Divinity of Jesus, but the Jews of Asia Minor, disputing with the Christian Church of the day.

v. 21.—*The dead.* It is important to remember that "the dead" is used in two senses in this passage, as throughout the Gospel. The man at Bethesda is a type of those who are spiritually dead. The physically dead are referred to in *vv.* 28, 29.

The fact that Jesus rose from the dead, or that God raised Him, is used in the New Testament not only as a pledge of immortality, but also as a sign of the same power that changes the lives of men (*cf.* 1 Peter i. 3; Rom. iv. 25). It is in this second sense that resurrection is spoken of almost exclusively in the Fourth Gospel. Eternal life is here and now for those who believe in Christ.

v. 22.—Another way in which the Divinity of Jesus is expressed and vindicated is in the fact that He *judges*

¹ The reference here is to Professor Mackintosh's smaller work, published by the S.C.M. The non-theological student may, however, with great profit, consult his larger work on *The Person of Jesus Christ*, pp. 427-31. Especially note his words: "The wants and longings which led men to worship these redeemers of heathenism were inspired of God, and into the empty, pathetic hands thus stretched to the skies He was in due time to put the perfect fulfilment of the world's desire."

men, not only after death, but here and now (*cf.* notes on iii. 19).

v. 23.—This power of “judgment” in the Johannine sense is meant to indicate the Divinity of Jesus. The rejection of that Divinity is also the dishonouring of God.

v. 24.—*Hath passed out of death into life* (*cf.* 1 John iii. 14). The favourite Johannine contrast, like light and darkness. This very conflict about Jesus’ Divinity is a conflict between light and darkness (i. 5).

v. 27.—To reject the experience of new life in Christ, with which the Church burned and glowed—the facts of the new courage, the new love, the new hope that animated it—is to incur judgment.

Because He is Son of Man. The emphasis is on the humanity, and the human experience of Jesus, as qualifying Him for the office of Judge. He does not judge without real knowledge.

v. 28, 29.—These verses always cause perplexity to critics of the Gospel. They refer to the final resurrection, and the dead are those literally dead. They seem to be out of keeping with *v.* 25, which refers to the spiritually dead. Probably what is meant is that the final Judgment after death is but the consummation of the process of judgment that is already going on in life.

2. Corroborative Witness to the Divinity of Jesus, *vv.* 30-47

(1) The witness of the Baptist (*vv.* 32-35).

(2) The witness of the Father, seen in Jesus’ works (*vv.* 36-38).

(3) The witness of the Scriptures (*vv.* 39-47).

Note that all these corroborative arguments are just the kind of arguments that the Christian Church could use, and did use in its controversies with the Jews. The Evangelist is seeking to strengthen the hands of his readers, as they were faced day by day by hostile objections. His purpose in so presenting Jesus’ thoughts on these topics is apologetic.

CHAPTER VII

II. B.

1. The Conflict between Faith and Unbelief.

(2) The Eucharist, vi. 1-71

In this chapter the Evangelist follows his usual plan. He first relates two signs, and then comes a discourse, or controversy, introduced and illustrated by them.

1. The Two "Signs," vv. 1-26.

The Feeding of the 5000 (vv. 1-14).

It is interesting to note three points, out of several, where the story differs from the Synoptics.

(1) In the Synoptic accounts (Matt. xiv. 15; Mark vi. 35, 36; Luke ix. 12), the disciples tell Jesus of the hunger of the multitude, and the plight they were in. In the Fourth Gospel Jesus Himself calls attention to it (v. 5).

(2) In the Synoptics, Jesus is represented as allowing the food to be distributed by the disciples. *In John, He distributes it in person, without any intermediaries.* (Note omission of "to the disciples and the disciples" in v. 11, R.V.)

Both these points would imply an emphasis in the Fourth Gospel, both on the "self-sufficiency" (cf. pp. 33 f.) of Jesus and also on His human compassion and lowly service.

(3) The source of the bread and fish is indicated—a humble one. It is the food of a young lad (*paidarion* = "laddie," v. 9). No magical properties could therefore belong to it in itself.

v. 14.—*The prophet* (cf. notes on i. 21).

v. 15.—*Sought to take Him by force, and make Him a king.* The statement seems to imply that while some of the crowd

hailed Him only as "the prophet," others went further, and hailed Him as King, *i.e.* as Messiah (*cf.* vii. 40, 41).

The mountain. No particular height is to be understood. Some spot in the northern part of the great Central Range that ran north and south is meant. This was called generally "the Mountain" (*cf.* G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography*, p. 53).

The Walking on the Water, vv. 17-21.

Note (1) v. 17.—*And it was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them* (R.V.), evidently presupposes a knowledge of the Synoptic stories, and also emphasises a point that is important in the Evangelist's mind, the presence of Jesus with His disciples in their need.

(2) There is no account of the calming of the storm. The impression is that their fear and distress are due to the sudden appearance of Jesus (Matt. xiv. 26 ; Mark vi. 49).

The mysterious appearance of Jesus is thus made prominent, and it is for this reason in particular that the Evangelist uses this story, along with the previous one, as a prelude to the Eucharistic narrative. Note also the rather elaborate and involved statement, vv. 22-25, intended to point out that Jesus could not have arrived by a boat, and culminating in the wondering question of the crowd at His sudden appearance (v. 25).

What is the connection of all this with the Eucharist? The Evangelist seeks to teach that Jesus is able to transcend the laws of space, and that His presence is to be looked for elsewhere than only in the Eucharistic meal. The storm-tossed ship symbolises the Church, and Jesus communicates Himself to its needs in a fashion that transcends limitations of sense. In our interpretation, the chapter refers to exaggerated ideas, current when the Gospel was written, as to the exclusive presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Not only in the Eucharist, but amid the storms of life does Jesus appear. His is a real spiritual presence everywhere.

2. The Discourse on the Bread of Life, vv. 26-65.

Note at the outset the indifference which the Evangelist shows at times to exact history. Jesus meets the disciples

on the sea-shore (*v.* 25); and yet in *v.* 59 we are told that the words were spoken in the synagogue at Capernaum. Note also *v.* 30, "What then doest Thou for a sign?" and yet two signs have preceded. These are clear indications that historically the words belong to another context. The Evangelist has clearly based his interpretation on words of Jesus spoken at different times.

The Discourse may be divided into parts. The Evangelist's aim to is show that the Eucharist is only one of the ways in which believers realise the Presence of Jesus.

(1) *vv.* 26-35.—We shall find that this part of the discourse is historically connected with what precedes (*v.* 26) and passes into a comparison between Jesus and the manna (*v.* 31). The Jews, especially in the Hellenistic period, were quite accustomed to spiritualise their history, and to identify the manna with Messiah (*cf.* 1 Cor. x. 1-5). Jesus claims to be the Bread from heaven, the "real" Bread, the true Messiah.

v. 26.—Jesus reproves the multitude for desiring the miracle on its physical side, and neglecting its symbolic side, as a "sign."

v. 27.—*Sealed.* To "seal" anything is to authenticate its genuineness. The sovereign gives his seal to his vicegerent or ambassador; *cf.* Gen. xli. 42; also John iii. 33, where the believer authenticates the message of God by the fact of his own individual experience. The whole verse recalls Deut. viii. 3.

vv. 28, 29.—The recipients have no conception of the Living Bread as a gift. It is still something they must work for. They are thinking of religious duties which must first be performed. Jesus tells them that all that is demanded of them is to "believe" in Himself. Faith is the gift of God, and can alone secure for them the Living Bread (*cf.* Matt. xix. 16 and xix. 26). Faith is not the acceptance of certain propositions about God, Christ, and the World, but an attitude of our whole being towards the Father, revealed in Christ. He made us for Himself. Faith is part of our spiritual constitution, God's gift.

vv. 30-34.—They ask for a "sign," such as was given to their

ancestors in the wilderness. In Neh. ix. 15 the manna is said to be given "by the hand of Moses." Probably the reference is to this Old Testament passage. Jesus replies (as His words ought to be translated), "What Moses gave you was not the bread from heaven; it is My Father who gives you the real bread from heaven" (Moffatt). Note also the translation of v. 33 in the R.V. The audience, like the woman of Samaria (iv. 15), ask for this Bread, not realising His meaning. Jesus makes His meaning plain by identifying Himself with the Bread from heaven.

v. 35.—*The Bread of Life*, i.e. the bread that gives life. Christianity is a "life" before it is doctrine. Jesus Himself is the only "sign." A living experience of Jesus is the ultimate proof of His claims.

Shall never hunger . . . never thirst. A tremendous claim. What kind of hunger and thirst is meant? *cf.* v. 34 and iv. 15. In both cases the desire is that ordinary human effort should be rendered unnecessary. Does faith render intellectual or moral effort unnecessary? Would such a request be a worthy one? Would it not be asking God to stultify His other gifts of mind and will? Calvin says that, "we are prone to seek something in Christ, other than Christ Himself." Jesus does not claim to settle questions of science, but to make us sure of the Father, and to reveal Him. From this standpoint, as a living experience, we face moral and intellectual questions and practical problems of life. We are only promised the *necessaries* of the spiritual life in Jesus, viz. assurance of God's love, care, and guidance, and the promise of victory over sin and death. We could not procure these ourselves, and our co-operation in realising them in life is presupposed.

(2) vv. 38-40 are difficult and are of the nature of an aside. They may be omitted in a preliminary study. They are really a mingling of the Evangelist's reflection and Jesus' words, on the subject suggested by v. 36. The Evangelist is again pondering the fact that these Jews actually rejected Jesus, the Bread of Life. Instinctively, we broaden out the question, until it has a wider reference, and ask, "Have some people no religious

faculty? Has God denied it to them?" We must realise that such a question is entirely outside the purview of the Fourth Evangelist: he is thinking entirely of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. We constantly think in universal where the Jew does so in particular terms. The strange contradiction presents itself to his reflection in this concrete form, that the Jews who see Jesus do not believe, although their whole past education and history were meant to lead up to Him as Christ. His explanation is that they are not "given" (v. 37); not "drawn" by God (v. 44). The failure of Jesus' mission among the Jews must have given great perplexity when Christianity was presented as an absolute and invincible religion. Over and over again we feel in the Gospel the pressure of this mighty problem.¹

The Jew must explain everything in relation to God. He did not distinguish, as we do, between natural law and spiritual law. Everything that happens must ultimately be the will of God. The Hebrew, also, blends in his thought very strangely cause and effect. At one time Pharaoh hardens his own heart (Exod. viii. 32); at another God hardens his heart (Exod. ix. 12). Compare also Isa. vi. 10, where the result of Isaiah's preaching is described as the very purpose of it in the mind of God. It is *essential* to realise this, to us, strange way of thinking, in all our attempts to understand the Biblical doctrine of Predestination. To say that a certain number are not "given" or "drawn" to Christ by God is simply the Jewish way of saying that unbelief in Christ in many cases is unintelligible, but yet must have its place in the eternal purpose of God.

(3) **vv. 41-58.**—This part of the discourse is cast in the form of an answer to two objections against the claim of Jesus to be "the Bread from heaven," *i.e.* the Messiah. These are urged by "the Jews."

(a) **An objection derived from Jesus' lowly origin** (vv. 41-51).

(b) **An objection based on a materialistic notion of the Eucharist** (vv. 52-58).

(a) **The objection derived from His lowly origin** (vv. 41-51).

¹ As in the case of Paul; *cf.* Rom. ix. 1 ff.

"He cannot be from heaven, because we know his father and mother. A really supernatural being would have no such ordinary parentage." We may be quite sure that this would continue to be a burning question between the Jews and the Christians in the Apostolic Church. It would also meet the missionaries of the new faith, as they came in contact with Græco-Jewish thought.

It has to be noted, however, that while the objection is put in a form which might have occurred to a Palestinian Jew in the time of Our Lord (*cf.* Matt. xiii. 55 ; Luke iv. 22), the statement that is objected to, viz. that Jesus claims to have descended from heaven to earth, and to be Himself the "Manna," points to an environment of Hellenistic thought. Philo identifies the manna with the *Logos*, as part of his attempt to find the conceptions of Greek philosophy anticipated in the Old Testament. In the later Rabbinic thought, the manna is identified with the Law, and not with the Messiah. It is not necessary to suppose that the Evangelist directly borrowed the idea from Philo. Both derive it from the same source of Hellenistic thought.

How is the objection met? At first sight it does not seem to be met at all. We are simply confronted with a bare assertion of the Jews' incapacity to understand, because they have not been "drawn" of God (*v.* 44); later, in *v.* 47, by a reassertion of the crowning fact of Christian experience: "Truly, truly, I tell you, the believer has eternal life"; and in the latter part of *v.* 51 by the words, "the bread which I will give is My flesh, given for the life of the world."

In other words, the Evangelist refuses to argue directly about the heavenly origin of Jesus. That is a futile task. Instead, he weaves into the discourse a series of utterances of Jesus which lay the stress of proof on Christian experience, and not on intellectual argument. Those who *come* to Jesus (a synonym for "believing in" Jesus) are *drawn* by the Father. The word is a tender one, used in the LXX version of Jer. xxxi. 3, "With loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Similarly, in *v.* 45 he emphasises the teaching of God by His Spirit. In other words,

unless His hearers are willing to yield themselves to the influence of the "grace and truth" of God that are manifested in Jesus, they cannot form a judgment of His person.

vv. 47-51 bring forward the fact that believers have, as a matter of fact, found eternal life in Jesus. Their "ancestors" died, although they ate the manna. The physical fact of death is not so much thought of, as the dread with which the Israelites spoke of "dying in the wilderness," and the fact that many of them died there without reaching the Promised Land. To the Jew, "Death" is more than physical death. It is the colourless, featureless life in *Hades*, the being separated from God. This is Paul's view of Death, when he conjoins it with Sin as "the last enemy."¹ To the Christian, death is otherwise: even here and now he has overcome it. All this involves a vindication of the lofty views held of the heavenly nature and Divinity of Jesus. In *v.* 51*b* the reference is clearly to the death of Jesus. The Evangelist's conception of the death of Jesus, as we have seen, is that it is the means of setting free the Spirit of Jesus for the whole world, for all believers. This, rather than the Pauline conception of an expiatory death, although that idea is in the background, is prominent in the words.

v. 46 is a characteristic aside, in the manner of the Evangelist. He wishes to emphasise that the relationship of Jesus to the Father is the necessary basis of the relationship established by the work of the Spirit in the hearts of men. No man has seen God. Jesus has seen the Father. He came from His state of existence with Him to earth, and is the revelation of this vision of the Father to men in His presence on earth. In other words the relation of Jesus to the Father is immediate; the relationship of the Christian to God is mediated by Jesus. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."²

(*b*) **The second objection** that is dealt with in *vv.* 52-58, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?", is one that concerns directly the Eucharist. It is impossible to believe that

¹ Cf. R. H. Strachan, *The Individuality of S. Paul*, p. 218 f.

² Cf. T. R. Glover, *The Jesus of History*, pp. 238 ff.

Jesus spoke these words to a Galilean audience exactly as we have them here. This Evangelist has indeed made it possible for us to believe that Jesus used sacramental language to His disciples before the night on which He was betrayed; but at the same time it is quite impossible to disentangle from this passage the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. We must take it as it stands; and, as it stands, it can only refer to objections that were urged in the end of the first century, or the beginning of the second, against the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist. The objector may be conceived as saying to a Christian, "What do you mean by saying that in your Eucharist you eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus? Do you mean what these heathen Greeks around us mean, when they say that they "eat" their god at a sacrificial meal?"¹

v. 52.—*How can this man give us His flesh to eat?* The only possible interpretation of this strange language about eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Jesus, seems to be that in John's day some purely magical and materialistic view of participation in the sacred elements was being held.² This might easily happen if we realise the influence of the Hellenistic environment, and the Greek conception of sacrifice.

¹ It is a disputed point among interpreters of the Greek mystery-religions, what the sacramental meal really stood for. Some hold that in partaking of the sacrificial animal they were thereby partaking of the deity, embodied in it. Others that the god was simply the host who presided (Kennedy, *PMR*, p. 259). In any case, it is easy to see how ordinary, unthinking people would readily arrive at a degraded conception of the sacramental act.

² It is quite true to say that when a Jew spoke of "flesh and blood," he meant the whole personality; also that, in the language of the Christian sacrament, the words "eating" the flesh, and "drinking" the blood of Jesus mean nothing else than the closest possible relationship with the Risen Christ. One would be inclined to welcome a verbal alteration in our modern language about this sacrament. In this chapter we see how, at a very early stage, the Church had to defend itself against sheer materialism. The Greek mind misunderstood. What is meant is just that the living Jesus is really present in the ordinance.

In this connection it may be useful to quote the following description, given by Miss J. R. Harrison, of Greek sacrifice.

At Athens there was an annual ceremony called the Ox-murder, or *Bouphonia*. "The ox was slain with all solemnity, and all those present partook of the flesh, and then the hide was stuffed with straw and sewed up, and next the stuffed animal was set on its feet and yoked to a plough as though it were ploughing. The Death is followed by a Resurrection. . . . What they wanted from the Bull was just that special life and strength which all the year long they had put into him, and nourished and fostered. That life was in his blood. They could not eat that flesh nor drink that blood unless they killed him. So he must die. But it was not to give him up to the gods that they killed him, not to 'sacrifice' him in our sense, but to have him, keep him, eat him, live *by* him and through him, by his grace" (*AAR*, pp. 89, 90).

It will readily be understood that the Greek mind, accustomed to this way of thinking, would tend to influence the interpretation of this Christian Sacrament in a direction which would ultimately destroy its real spiritual and moral significance. Indeed we have clear traces in the Letters of Ignatius, who was partly a contemporary of the Evangelist, although belonging to a later time, of the influence of such ideas. He says that "the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins, and which the Father of His goodness raised up" (*Smyrn.* 6); and again he speaks of the Christian as "breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality and the antidote that we should not die but live for ever in Jesus Christ" (*Ephesians*, 20). I cannot help thinking that the constant reiteration of the words, "I will raise Him up at the last day," in this chapter is really to antagonise the idea that the elements in the sacrament are themselves capable of producing immortality in the communicant.

Through this whole chapter the Evangelist has the atmosphere produced by conceptions of this class in view, and *is definitely opposing them*. In order to do so, he recalls his readers to the historical Christ, and gives them in the discourse

an interpretation of His teaching. He leads us to believe that the Last Supper was not the only occasion on which Jesus gave utterance to sacramental ideas. This is part of his plan for drawing away the minds of his readers from such purely superstitious notions of the efficacy of the sacrament.

Recall the fact that "flesh and blood" in Jewish thought simply means "personality." The Christian communicant makes his own the sacrificial death of Jesus. That means that God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ is made very real; also that the same spirit of self-sacrificing love must animate the Christian (see notes on chapter xiii.). Note how carefully the sense of the word "eating" as defined in *v.* 57. It means to do the will of Jesus, as Jesus does the will of God or lives by the Father (*cf.* Ezek. ii. 1; iii. 1, 3).

Are we not apt to forget in our thoughts of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that besides the rite of giving and receiving, there is also the rite of breaking the bread and pouring out the wine? Exclusive emphasis on the first may lead, even to-day, to materialistic or semi-materialistic conceptions of the ordinance.

v. 60.—The utterance of perplexed souls: *This is a hard saying; who can hear it?* We can echo it to-day, when sacramental doctrine so divides the Church of Christ. They might say: "We cannot see Jesus. He was crucified as you say. How can we receive Him, His flesh and blood, as you say, in the Eucharist? He is dead. Yet you say that Jesus is really present in this sacrament."

The answer comes in *vv.* 62, 63. The Cross was a stumbling-block, "scandalised" (*v.* 61) the disciples before it happened. It "scandalised" many afterwards. To the Greeks it was foolishness. Note how the Evangelist meets the objection—by the statement of Jesus that the Cross was really the entrance upon a life of eternal existence, from which He had come. To dwell on the outward fact of the Cross, the wounded flesh of Jesus "profiteth nothing"; its spiritual interpretation, what it meant to Jesus, alone gives life, "quickeneth." The words of Jesus, interpreting this heavenly mystery, as distinct from

the outward event, are "spirit and life." No clearer or more conclusive statement of the spiritual nature of the Eucharist, untrammelled by any materialistic notions, such as the Evangelist is combating, could be given.

vv. 64, 65.—Again the Evangelist returns to the case of Judas in particular (see p. 27); *cf. vv.* 70, 71.

vv. 66-71.—The Death of Jesus is a "judgment," or dividing-line that sets men on one side or the other, according as they are able to respond to it. Peter's confession is given as typical of the ideal Christian attitude of faith, whether sacramental or otherwise. "Thou hast words of eternal life."

There were moments when Jesus could not speak in words, but used symbol. Such a moment came to Him at the Last Supper. The Cross, the means of redemption, was before Him; around Him were men who could not see beyond His grave. Is that symbol which He then used not the greatest of His words? It has sharply divided the Church of Christ in the interpretation of it, but it is still a deathless symbol. It sets clearly before us the spirit that must animate all our life, the spirit of selfless love and noblest conduct. Above all, it brings near to us the inexhaustible source of that Love, the dying love of Jesus, ever-living and ever-present, in communion with us, and we with Him. A Communion service, where men realise the mystery that Jesus died for them, is the summit of Christian experience. If, in all our churches, we have the same experience at Communion seasons, however the rite may differ outwardly, why should the Table of the Lord continue to divide Christian people? Are men not all alike when they are deeply moved—as in this sacrament by the overwhelming assurance that God, in the dying love of Jesus, freely forgives their sins at such a cost?

CHAPTER VIII

II. B.

1. The Conflict between Faith and Unbelief

(3) The Messiahship of Jesus, vii. 1-52

Certain current objections to the Messiahship of Jesus are mentioned and met by the Evangelist.

(a) vii. 1-13.—**The Messianic Secret.** The objection that Jesus did not proclaim Himself publicly.

v. 3.—It is noteworthy that the suggestion of the brethren comes after the diminution of His disciple-circle in Galilee. They suggest that He should seek to make a fuller impression on the disciple-circle in Jerusalem. What the Galileans had rejected the Judeans might accept; see pp. 151 ff.

v. 4.—The implication is that Jesus withdraws Himself from public notice, and yet makes claims that can only find vindication in publicity.

v. 6.—*Your time is always ready*: ironical; they forget that Messiahship as understood by Jesus is a moral and spiritual vocation.

v. 8.—*To this feast.* The Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus has in view another feast, where His fate will be decided.

v. 10.—This verse may cause difficulty. Why did Jesus alter His mind? Two or three days' waiting are implied, and the fact must be taken along with passages like ii. 3-8; xi. 6 f. He knows that His hour is not yet come; yet it ultimately grows clear to Him that He may, in accordance with God's will, and without forcing the crisis, go up to the feast, not publicly, but as it were "in secret," i.e. *incognito*.

v. 12.—*People* ; rather “crowd.” The crowd of pilgrims who had come up for the feast is meant. Most of them had seen Him and heard Him for the first time. Even among them there are judgments directly contrary to one another (*cf.* vii. 41-43). The ecclesiastical party are often annoyed by the way in which Jesus rouses interest in ordinary people without theological training (vii. 49).

(2) *vv. 15-24.*—An objection founded on His supposed lack of education in the Law.

v. 15.—*Having never learned* : self-taught, and not trained in the Rabbinical schools. The Jews are surprised at His knowledge of “letters” or sacred learning.

“The trained mind outs the upright soul,
As Jesus said the trained mind might,
Being wiser than the Sons of Light ;
But trained men’s minds are spread so thin,
They let all sorts of darkness in.
Whatever light man finds they doubt it,
They love not light, but talk about it.”

—JOHN MASEFIELD, *The Everlasting Mercy*, p. 47.

v. 16.—*My teaching.* They look on Him as self-taught and a marvel. Jesus repudiates the idea of being self-taught, and says that His teaching is of God.

v. 17.—The will of God is revealed in the Law and the Prophets, *i.e.* the Old Testament. He who applies himself to the teaching therein contained will be in a position to understand the teaching of Jesus. Only this will must be “done,” not merely learned. Similarly, Jesus’ teaching can only be understood by those who are willing to put themselves in line with it, and put it into practice.

v. 18.—The Jewish Rabbis have spoken on their own initiative, relying on tradition, and manufacturing it as they go. Jesus does not do so, but seeks God’s glory. He claims to fulfil what God had already willed in the Law and Prophets.

vv. 21-24.—(Apparently the reference in *vv. 21-23* is to the healing of the man at Bethesda (chap. v.). Accordingly some

critics think that vv. 15-24 have got displaced, and should really be inserted after v. 47). The argument throughout is in the Rabbinical style. Jesus is proving to them that their interpretation of the law itself recognises the possibility, on occasion, of a technical breach of it. On the Sabbath no work was allowed to be done ; and yet, if the eighth day after birth fell on a Sabbath, the custom was that circumcision be performed. Jesus claims the same liberty to interpret the law as they, and to heal on the Sabbath ; cf. Matt. xi. 12 ; xii. 5, 12 ; Luke xiii. 15 f. In v. 23 the literal translation is, " made every part of a man whole," as distinct from circumcision.

(3) vv. 25-31.—**An objection founded on Jesus' known origin.**

v. 25.—*Them of Jerusalem*, lit. " Jerusalemites."

v. 27.—The reference is to the popular Jewish idea of the mysterious origin and appearance of the Messiah. He has been born, exists somewhere, is unknown, and does not even know Himself. He has no power until Elias come to anoint Him, and make Him manifest to all. (These ideas actually form part of a Jewish argument against Jesus' Messiahship, in Justin Martyr, *Trypho*, viii.)

v. 28.—*Cried* (v. 37 ; xii. 44). Jesus was deeply moved, and the emotion finds expression in His tone of voice.

v. 30.—*His hour was not yet come* ; a frequent expression in this Gospel ; cf. ii. 4 ; viii. 20 ; xiii. 1 ; xvii. 1.

(4) vv. 32-39.—**The objection : " Is Jesus a Messiah for the Gentiles ? "**

v. 32.—The Temple police appear to arrest Him. It is not yet His hour, but their appearance suggests that the time is short ; cf. *yet a little while* (v. 33).

v. 34.—Contrast the words to the disciples in xiii. 33.

vv. 35, 36.—The Jews of Jerusalem, who crucified Jesus, are regarded as foreshadowing unconsciously the world-wide mission of Jesus (cf. xi. 51). *The Dispersed*, lit. " the Diaspora " ; see p. 25.

v. 37.—The Feast of Tabernacles lasted seven days.

vv. 37, 38.—An important change must here be made in the text.

The words read in Codex Bezae, "If any thirst let them come, and let him who believes in Me drink. As the Scripture saith, Out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water." This is confirmed in another MS. Evidently the "rivers of living water" are regarded as coming from Jesus, and not from the believer. All that is necessary is to read the opening words of *v.* 38, "he that believeth on Me," as the subject of "drink," in *v.* 37. There is even earlier testimony to the reading. In a letter addressed to Christians in Gaul by the Church at Lyons (175 A.D.) a certain martyr is spoken of as "besprinkled and strengthened by the heavenly fountain of the water of life that issues from the navel of Jesus," evidently an allusion to this passage; *vv.* 37, 38 would therefore read, "If any man thirst let Him come unto Me,—and let him drink that believeth on Me. As the Scripture saith, Out of His belly" etc.

Ezek. xxxviii. 12 (*cf.* *v.* 5) speaks of Jerusalem as the "navel" of the earth; "fountain" is applied to the Messiah in Zech. xiii. 1. Also, Ezek. xlvii. 1-12 should be read, where a stream of living water is described as issuing from the Temple, and becoming a river that ran through all the earth. Jesus is the new Temple. By His death the Holy Spirit is set free and given to all the world (*v.* 39).

The words are also closely connected with part of the ritual connected with the last day of this feast. At early morning a priest with a following of attendants went to the stream of Shiloh or Siloam, which sprang from the rock on which the Temple stood. Amid the sound of music, and the recitation of passages like Isa. xii. 3, the priest filled a golden pitcher with the water, which was carried back to the Temple with similar rejoicings. This, along with a pitcher of wine, was poured on the altar (*cf.* Edersheim, *The Temple Ministry and its Services*, pp. 241).

v. 38.—*As the Scripture hath said.*—No particular passage of known Scripture is referred to. The reference is obscure. Probably various passages, such as those quoted, are thought of together.

(5) *vv.* 40-52.—A vivid résumé of various arguments for and against Jesus' Messiahship.

Is the Christ from Galilee? Was He born at Bethlehem? Why did the Temple police not arrest Him at once? Did any of the rulers believe in Him, or was He only the Messiah of the multitude? Did not Nicodemus speak in the Sanhedrin in His favour?

CHAPTER IX

II. B.

2. The Conflict developed under the Ideas of Truth and Falsehood, viii. 12-ix. 41.

(1) The Truth about Jesus evidenced by His own Self-Conselousness, viii. 12-59

(vii. 53-viii. 11.—An unknown fragment that has somehow become attached to this Gospel. There is no reason to think that it is not authentic. It is probably a portion of some lost gospel, and is certainly not a part of this one.)

The key-word to this section is "light" (viii. 12). In the end, the truth about Jesus is self-evident, like the light (ix. 25). It is known through His own self-consciousness, which culminates in the great pre-existence utterance (viii. 58).

The opening words, "I am the light of the world," seem to be suggested by a portion of the ritual of the feast. A great illumination took place on the night between the first day and the second day of the feast of Tabernacles. A full description will be found in Edersheim, *The Temple Ministry and its Services*, pp. 246 ff. Four large golden candelabra, each with four golden bowls to hold oil, were set up in the Court of the Women, and against them rested four ladders. Four youths of priestly descent filled each of these from a pitcher of oil. There was not a house in Jerusalem whose courtyard was not lighted up that night by the Temple illumination.

The exposition of the verses that follow may be rapidly passed over, as many of the ideas are already familiar.

vv. 12-59.—The Self-witness of Jesus. The argument all

through is Rabbinical. The objection is made that the witness of Jesus is untrue, because it is not corroborated. The reply is that they are "judging after the flesh," *i.e.* by outward appearance (vii. 24). Jesus judges no man (*cf.* notes on iii. 17 ; xii. 47); yet His self-witness is itself a decisive judgment of men, and it is also corroborated by the witness of the Father (v. 17, 18). The life He lived, the character He exhibited, the words He spoke, the Cross itself, all judge men ; the light reveals the darkness. With v. 19 compare xiv. 8, 9, where a question is asked of the same kind, but in a different mood, and receives an answer in a different tone. V. 20 implies that the crowd of pilgrims has suddenly vanished. Jesus is speaking to a smaller circle.

v. 21-30.—The central idea in this passage is that the death of Jesus means forgiveness of sin. This result is in itself a proof of His Divinity.

Two verses only call for special comment.

v. 22.—*Will He kill Himself?* It is probable that an objection might be brought against the efficacy of the death of Jesus, as understood by Christians, that He really courted death. The Stoic held that, if God so willed it, it was permissible for a man to put an end to his own life (p. 34). Epictetus says, "If you can no longer endure life, leave it ; but remember in doing so to withdraw quietly, not at a run. When God shall give you the signal, and release you from this service, then go to Him ; but for the present endure to dwell in this place where He hath set you" (*Diss.* i. 9). Such ideas would be taught by the wandering Stoic preachers (p. 5), and the Jewish objector to Christianity might urge that Jesus had only, in a certain fashion, obeyed the Stoic injunction. One can readily see how the doctrine that He laid down His life "of Himself" would be exposed to such objections from subtle minds.

v. 28.—A reference to the Crucifixion. So far from being a demonstration of failure, it is to be a demonstration of Who Jesus really is. "Then shall ye know that I am," as the literal translation runs. No doubt "Messiah," or some such idea, is to be supplied as predicate. Note that wherever, in the

Gospel, "I am He" occurs, the second pronoun is unexpressed in the Greek.

vv. 31-59.—The controversy next centres round the nature of Freedom. The words are spoken to certain Jews "who had believed Him" (R.V.). They are singled out from among the large number that had reached the stage of "belief *in* Him" (*v. 30*).

v. 32 contains the central theme. The freedom Jesus speaks of is freedom from sin. The Jews persistently and stupidly interpret Him as meaning political freedom, and they resent the interpretation that they had ever been slaves (*v. 33*). They had been, and were, "in bondage," but the proud, theocratic spirit of the Jew speaks. God is and was their King, not Pharaoh, nor Nebuchadnezzar, nor Cæsar.

v. 35.—*The house.* Israel is often spoken of in the Old Testament as "the house of God" (*cf. Isa. v. 7*). Apparently the meaning is that, continuing bond-servants of sin, they shall be deprived of their ancient privileges, owing to their rejection of Jesus. Perhaps the story of Hagar is referred to (*Gen. xxi. 9*). This story was allegorised in Jewish theology (*cf. Gal. iv. 21; v. 1*). It is not wonderful that a statement like this, identifying the "true" Israel with Hagar, should arouse such bitter resentment.

vv. 37-45.—We cannot conceive Jesus thus exasperating His opponents. The tones of contemporary controversy are heard here, and right through this passage.

vv. 46-59.—We may note these three points of attack on the self-consciousness of Jesus, and the way in which that self-consciousness is defended or rather defends itself.

(*a*) *vv. 46, 47.*—**His self-consciousness attacked on the ground that He has no sense of sin.**

v. 46.—The "sinlessness" of Jesus is a somewhat unsatisfying expression, because it is *negative*; what we require to be sure of is the *positive* fact to which it corresponds. In calling Jesus the "truth," or in regarding Him as "speaking the truth," truth, of course, must be taken in the usual Johannine sense. The doctrine of Jesus' "sinlessness" is stated on its positive

side in *v.* 29 (*I do always those things that please Him*), and in *iv.* 34. Also significant are the words of *xiv.* 30, which are a denial that the human nature of Jesus is like armour which cannot be pierced, and has no joints that make Him vulnerable to the attack of evil. This is not equivalent to saying that Jesus did not really feel temptation. Temptation is not sin. The Fourth Gospel makes it very emphatic that in Jesus there was not only no inward consent to what is evil, but a positive, uninterrupted, and continual consent to the will of God. Perhaps a better word than "sinlessness" is "moral supremacy," and that can only be established as following naturally from the fact of His unique relationship with God. The decisive proof of the moral supremacy of Jesus is that neither in prayer, nor in the presence of death, moments when the ordinary human consciousness feels most its sinfulness, is there any confession of sin from the lips of Jesus. Also, did He not directly forgive sin? Does this not imply a consciousness entirely free from guilt? (*Mark ii.* 5).

(*b*) *vv.* 48-50.—**The self-consciousness of Jesus is attacked on the ground that "He has a devil" or "demon":** in other words, that He is mad. To His opponents, the climax of madness is that He makes such a statement as that in *v.* 51.

(*c*) *vv.* 52-59.—**His consciousness of pre-existence is attacked,** both verbally, and finally with stones (*v.* 59). There is Johannine irony here. It is like the waves lifting themselves up to drown the stars.

This phase of the controversy arises out of the statement in *v.* 51. The argument seems to proceed on the lines that Abraham, the friend of God, who obeyed God as none other, is dead. Abraham and the prophets "kept the word of God," and yet they died. Jesus shows His "madness" in promising to His disciples an escape from death, which not even Abraham and the prophets themselves escaped. "Whom makest Thou Thyself?"

v. 54.—Jesus does not make Himself anything, does not glorify Himself. "My Father glorifieth Me." The word "glorify" seems to be used first in the ordinary sense of boastful

self-appraisement, and next in the peculiar Johannine sense. The "glorification" of Jesus begins with the Cross, and reaches its climax when He ascends to the Father (see notes on xx. 17).

v. 55.—There is an emphasis on the pronoun "My" and "your" The Jews say "our" God, but that does not rest on the unique experience of Sonship that makes Jesus say "My Father."

v. 56.—*Abraham rejoiced to see My day.* Late Jewish thought depicted the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "welcoming" in Sheol, the place of the dead, the Messiah when He appears. They arise from Sheol and "exult." The passage is very difficult, but the force of the argument seems to depend on the assertion that Abraham is really alive, because Jesus is alive.

v. 57.—*Not yet fifty years old.* Fifty was the age when a man was regarded as in his "prime." Did Jesus look older than He really was? He was only thirty-three.

Hast Thou seen Abraham? There is little doubt that the true reading is, "Hath Abraham seen thee?"

v. 58.—*Before Abraham was, I am.* This utterance is to be compared with i. 1, 2 and i. 15, 30. The expression "I am" is perplexing. It is the same as in iv. 26; vi. 20; viii. 28; xiii. 19; xviii. 5, 6. In the Greek there is no predicate. The expression is to be interpreted in the sense of Deut. xxxii. 39; Isa. xli. 4. It is a claim of Divinity, and here the claim includes external pre-existence. We must beware of analysing the thought too minutely. Remember that the Evangelist is not a metaphysician.

CHAPTER X

II. B.

2. The Conflict developed under the ideas of Truth and Falsehood.

(2) The Truth about Jesus evidenced by Individual Experience, ix. 1-41

The Truth about Jesus is established by the evidence of individual experience. The theme is illustrated by the healing of the man born blind, ix. 1-41.

vv. 2, 3.—The man is *blind from his birth*; therefore the sin spoken of must have been committed *in a previous existence*.

In Jewish thought, even before the influence of Oriental ideas upon it, we have something that seems to correspond to the idea of the pre-existence of human souls. In Jer. i. 5 God tells the prophet that He knew him even during his pre-natal existence in the womb, and we have a similar thought in Ps. cxxxix., especially the words (*v. 16*), "In Thy book were all my members written, which day by day were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them."

The Jews carried the notion of the Omniscience of God so far as to believe that in the knowledge of God individual lives were already thought of, even before they were actually conceived or born. As we have seen elsewhere, however, the Jew is not a metaphysician, and his conceptions of pre-existence hardly amounted to what we would call pre-existence of souls. The deeply religious man refused to think that there was any moment in time or in eternity when he was absent from the thought of God (*cf. Eph. i. 4*).

One feels, therefore, that there is more than a purely Jewish idea here. It is suggested that the man himself had sinned. That is a Hellenistic, and not a strictly Jewish idea. In the Hellenism of the Evangelist's day (pp. 47 f.) the doctrine was held that souls must pass through many existences in order to free themselves from impurity and be fitted for union with the Divine.

The question of *v.* 2 really unites the Hellenistic and the purely Jewish interpretations of the problem of pain and moral evil. The Jew interpreted the existence of much personal misfortune and sin to the influence of heredity in a *spiritual*, and not in a physical sense ; *cf.* Exod. xx. 5, but also Jer. xxxi. 29. Jeremiah concentrates on the thought of individual responsibility, and repudiates the fatalism of heredity. The Jewish notion of heredity had its source in a conception of God, and not in a conception of physical laws of nature, like the modern view. We must beware of reading modern scientific views into the Bible. As the conception of God expanded and became moralised in the progress of revelation, a doctrine like that of Jer. xxxi. 29 became possible. When Paul speaks as he does in Rom. v. 12, he thinks of "sin" as a hostile demoniac power that took possession of the human race in Adam, the first man ; but he also admits that Adam's descendants consented to its sway in their own lives, "for that all have sinned." The thought is obscure, we may frankly admit. We must also frankly refuse to be bound even by Paul's philosophy of sin, if it means that children are born actual guilty sinners, instead of with a bias towards evil.

v. 3.—The answer amounts to a refusal to speculate on the question, and to a repudiation of both Jewish and Hellenistic theories ; *cf.* Luke xiii. 2, 5. The main point is that it is possible for God to heal this man. He is as he is, in order that the works and power of God "may be made manifest in him." Remember in pondering this answer what is said about the Jewish notion of cause and effect on p. 122, and compare *v.* 39. The immediate truth which the Evangelist wishes to impress on his readers is that God in Christ can open the eyes of this

man. Remember, also, that the vision of God as a moral and spiritual force in the lives of men was the central doctrine of the mystery-religions (pp. 49 ff.).

v. 4.—Note again “we” in the mouth of Jesus (R.V.). It is the Christian community that speaks in its confident experience of communion with the glorified Jesus.

Two things are asserted about **Suffering** in these verses.

(1) That the fact of suffering is not pre-eminently a call to speculate on the problem, but to *action on behalf of the sufferer*. Such action is a divine mission, and God’s work.

(2) That the call to action is “urgent.” “The night cometh.” That is suggested by the example of Jesus here, whose mission on earth is drawing to a close. Such opportunities must be seized, as life is short.

vv. 6, 7.—A description of the process of healing. Two points of rather subtle symbolism are apparent: (1) The moistened clay reveals the influence of Gen. ii. 7; this is an act of new creation. (2) “Siloam” is interpreted as “sent,” an allusion to the Messiahship of Jesus. He came for this purpose.

vv. 8-38.—It would be tedious to enter into the story in too much detail. It is full of repetition, assertion, and counter-assertion, after the Johannine style. It is a strange combination of narrative and discourse. The main thought is the attempt of the ecclesiastical authorities to discredit the fact of the miracle. Soon we see very clearly that the physical miracle gives place to the spiritual miracle in the mind of the Evangelist, the miracle of personal experience as a testimony to the truth and power of Jesus. This great fact is insurmountable, and in the end the only way in which the Jewish authorities can deal with it is to excommunicate the man (v. 34). We must realise again that the synagogue of which the Evangelist is really thinking would be in Asia Minor, and not in Palestine. The chapter is founded on an actual incident, but we know that excommunication in the time of Jesus could not be pronounced by the authorities of a synagogue. The Sanhedrin alone could do this. Among the Jews of the Dispersion, on the other hand, the synagogue became more and more a central

authority ; for the Jewish colonists were separated by long distance from the ecclesiastical authorities at Jerusalem. There may have been some minor form of excommunication that could be exercised by a local synagogue in Our Lord's day, but there can be no doubt that the strong words used in *v.* 34 imply the severest sentence possible. It was not until the apostolic age that complete excommunication was made the punishment for belief in Jesus (*cf.* Luke vi. 22 ; John xvi. 2).

These verses 8-38 may also be taken as a study in the development of Christian experience of Jesus. Various stages are marked :—

(1) *v.* 11.—“ A man that is called Jesus ” is the source of it. This is the only answer he can give to the neighbours. Where He is, he does not know (*v.* 12).

(2) *v.* 17.—*He is a prophet.* This testimony is called forth by the attempt to discredit Jesus by accusing Him of breaking the Sabbath law and therefore of being a sinner. The man does not hesitate to call Him a prophet. Prophets sometimes said hard things about the Sabbath and the law in general and prophesied its abolition (Hos. ii. 11 ; Isa. i. 13 ; Jer. ii. 8 ; Ezek. vii. 26 ; Ps. li. 16, etc.). Legalism, whether in mind or in worship, is the enemy of personal, living experience. Ripe experience speaks for itself (*v.* 21).

(3) *v.* 25.—There comes a stage when experience learns to put some questions in a subordinate place, or even to regard them as negligible, and to lay the emphasis on the real facts that have been accomplished in a man's life ; “ one thing I know.” Theological questions about Jesus do not require to be answered before faith in Him is possible. Note how in *v.* 26 and elsewhere the opponents put the emphasis on the “ how.” The man charged says “ I know.”

(4) *vv.* 28-33.—Personal experience gains courage to oppose even hoary tradition. Note the irony of the retort in *v.* 30.

(5) *vv.* 35-38.—Personal experience rests ultimately not on the authority of any Church, but on Jesus Christ. Jesus “ finds ” him, excommunicated and churchless, and accepts him as one of His flock.

v. 39.—*Judgment*.—*Krima* is the word here, not *krisis*. It expresses the *result* rather than the process.

v. 41.—They are not blind in the sense that they are suffering from some moral or physical incapacity, like this man, for which they are not responsible. They have thought about Jesus and have deliberately rejected Him. “Now ye say, we see ; therefore your sin remaineth ” (*cf.* notes on xx. 23).

CHAPTER XI

II. B.

3. The Conflict developed as an Answer to the Question : Is there Salvation outside the Jewish Church ?

x. 1-42.—The Good Shepherd, or The Allegory of the Fold and the Flock.

The connection is close between chapters ix. and x. In ix. 34 we are told that the man was excommunicated because he dared to assert his own personal experience of Jesus' healing power, against the authority of the Jewish Church, represented by the Pharisees. Note carefully that the word for "excommunicate" is the same word as is used in x. 4, "when he hath *put forth* all his own." The excommunicated man has really entered into the flock of Jesus, leaving the fold of Judaism. The Jews are really the blind agents of Jesus (ix. 40, 41). In x. 16 the words "flock" and "fold" are deliberately contrasted. This verse is the key to the chapter, "Other sheep I have which are not of this *fold*" (of the Jewish Church at Jerusalem). "Them also I must lead" (not bring), "and they shall hear" (rather obey) "My voice, and there shall be one *flock* and one shepherd." Westcott has truly designated the A.V. translation as "disastrous." In chapter x., in the development of the allegory (*vv.* 1-6) the Evangelist has in view the experience of separation from the Jewish Synagogue, which must have been in itself a heavy cross for many a Jewish Christian of his time to bear. The whole of the Epistle to the Hebrews is written to reassure Jewish Christians who feel that, in their

expulsion from the ancient Church of God and separation from the ancient Temple services, they are almost cutting themselves off from God. Hebrews xi., especially, is written in order to assure them that it was faith, and not membership of the Jewish Church that constituted the real relation between God and the heroes of the Old Testament. So far as the readers had faith in Christ, they were still in the ancient line (Heb. xii. 1; *cf.* Heb. xiii. 13, 20). Probably also we have in the thought of chapter x. echoes of the Judaistic controversy which arose in Paul's day, within the Christian Church itself.

(1) vv. 1-6.—**The Parable or "Allegory."** The word translated "parable," used by this Evangelist in v. 6, is one that may mean either (1) a symbolic or figurative saying (xvi. 25-29), or (2) a discourse in which a thing is illustrated by the use of similes or comparisons. So it is here. In a sense, the whole Gospel is a "parable." It has been said that we miss in this particular parable the sheep on the shoulder of the shepherd, as compared with Luke xv. 3-7. Have we not, however, the same tenderness in John x. 14-16? Also, is he not a man who has himself been on the Shepherd's shoulder, and is now in the hollow of His hand (v. 28), who writes it down?

v. 1.—*The sheepfold.* The general conception is of a fold into which the sheep are led by night to secure them against the attack of thieves and wild beasts, and left under the charge of a "porter" (v. 3). We must not attempt to force a hidden meaning out of every detail. The "porter" is just a descriptive detail, not to be pressed to yield a hidden meaning.

v. 5.—"Sometimes we enjoyed our noonday rest beside one of these Judæan wells, to which three or four shepherds come down with their flocks. The flocks mixed with each other, and we wondered how each shepherd would get his own again. But after the watering and the playing were over, the shepherds one by one went up different sides of the valley, and each called out his peculiar call, and the sheep of each drew out of the crowd to their own shepherd, and the flocks passed away as orderly as they came" (G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog. of Palestine*, p. 312).

(2) vv. 7-10.—**The Door : Christian Experience and Excommunication.**

The words here are spoken with the claim of the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities to exercise the power of excommunication specially in view. It is the same claim that is made by the Jewish authorities of the Evangelist's own day in the synagogues of Asia Minor.

v. 7.—*I am the door of the sheep.* In mystical fashion Jesus represents Himself as One who alone admits to or excludes from His Church ; or perhaps rather as One through Whom admission or exclusion are brought about (see note on v. 9).

v. 8.—*All that (ever) came before Me are thieves and robbers.* Who the "thieves and robbers" are is not quite clear. The reference may be to the Pharisees of chapter ix., and to those who have been responsible for so emphasising ceremonialism and ecclesiasticism among the Jewish people, that they have "robbed" the nation of their power to recognise their Messiah and Saviour (*cf.* Ezek. xxxiv. 1-16 ; Jer. xxiii. 1-4).

v. 9.—Note carefully that the reference here is still to ecclesiastical authorities. They themselves must find salvation through Christ (*cf.* 1 Cor. iii. 5 and Num. xxvii. 17) ; and only in virtue of that have they a right to enter the fold, and to exercise authority over the sheep. "They shall go in and go out and find pasture," *i.e.* for the sheep. We may compare the thought in xiii. 16. It is quite possible that within the Christian Church itself there was springing up in the Evangelist's time a certain arbitrary exercising of external ecclesiastical authority (*cf.* John iii. 9, 10 ; also John xxi. 15). To have the right as an under-shepherd to enter into the fold is interpreted by the author of the Appendix (chap. xxi.) as equivalent to being able to answer the question sincerely, "Lovest thou Me ?" It may also be added that this does not exclude the conception that members of the Church of Christ, as themselves lovers of Jesus, have the right to determine the sincerity of the answer, and to set apart their own "under-shepherds."

v. 10.—*That they may have life.* A great saying. *More abundantly* ; compare notes on iv. 14 and translate as follows,

"that they might have abundance." All our faculties, moral, spiritual, and intellectual—our whole personality—are quickened and enriched by life in Christ.

(3) vv. 11-21.—The death and resurrection of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the basis of Christian unity.

I am the Good Shepherd; "good" as contrasted with the hireling. Good is *kalos*, which, in this connection, is almost untranslatable. It means both "beautiful" and "fit for His work"; "competent." Perhaps the Scotch word "braw" or "bonnie" fits it most exactly.

Jesus' fitness or goodness, competence, inward and outward, as a Shepherd is testified in two directions:—(a) He *lays down His life for the sheep* in contrast to him that is a "hireling and no shepherd"; (b) *He knows His sheep*. The word for "know" here is "to know by experience." The sheep will allow its own shepherd to handle it; he knows its ways, and it knows his voice. It is a moving description of the bond that unites Jesus and His followers. It is very remarkable that this particular word for "know" should be used in vv. 14, 15, where the relationship between Jesus and the Father is regarded as comparable to the relationship between Jesus and the Christian. Jesus came to know by experience the will of God for men. The laying down of His life "for the sheep" is the climax of His love for them, and of His knowledge of their need, and of the Father's purpose in sending Him.

v. 16.—The great missionary motive. Missionary experience to-day is teaching the Church the difference between the "fold" and the "flock." The "fold" has walls; the flock moves with freedom, choosing its own pasture ground under the leadership of the Good Shepherd.

vv. 17, 18.—See notes on xi. 64. Emphasis is continually laid on the fact that the death of Jesus was not the result of circumstances, but voluntary.

vv. 19-21.—An interlude of a kind with which we are already familiar; v. 21 again shows how close the connection of thought is with chapter ix.

(4) vv. 22-42.—Jesus the Good Shepherd is identified with God.

(Frequently in the Old Testament God is spoken of as the Shepherd of His people ; Ps. xxiii. ; Isa. xl. 11, xxxiv. 1-16 ; Jer. xxiii. 1-4 ; Zech. xi. 4-17 ; Micah v. 3.)

v. 30.—*I and My Father are one*, lit. "one power" or "one thing" (*cf.* xvii. 11, 22, 23, and notes).

v. 22.—*Feast of the Dedication*. It took place in December, three months after the Feast of Tabernacles.

It was winter ; symbolic, like "it was night" (xiii. 30). The coldness and hostility of the Jews are symbolised (*v.* 24).

v. 24.—*How long . . . doubt?* rather, as in R.V., "hold us in suspense." It is often pointed out that in the Fourth Gospel Jesus reveals His Messiahship at the very outset of His ministry. A saying like this must be set over against that position.

Tell us plainly. They demand an answer "yes" or "no" to a question that cannot be so answered. Conviction on the subject of the person of Jesus is a matter of experience, and not of mere intellectual investigation in a cold, "wintry," non-committal atmosphere.

v. 25.—*I told you* ; through My "works" ; not merely the miracles, but including the revelation of His whole personality in daily intercourse (*cf.* Luke vii. 19).

vv. 26-39, should be grouped around the statement in v. 30 of Jesus' identity with the Father.

That identity is (1) *Assumed* (vv. 28-30). The Good Shepherd keeps His sheep in life and safety, and His power is the power of God. There is considerable diversity of opinion as to the correct reading in v. 29. Probably we should translate "That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all," *i.e.* the Christian community is the Father's, and therefore also Christ's possession, dearer than all else.

(2) *Challenged* (vv. 31-33). The Jews accuse Him of blasphemy. Here again the Evangelist is echoing contemporary controversy. The Christian regarded Jesus as God, and to the Jew this was a denial of monotheism.

(3) *Vindicated* (vv. 34-42):—

(a) *By appeal to Scripture* (vv. 34-36). *Your Law* = Old Testament ; *cf.* xii. 34 ; xv. 25. Ps. lxxxii. 6 is cited, where

the rulers of the nation are referred to. There can be no doubt that the king in Jewish thought, regarded as the vice-gerent of God on earth, was in religious poetry sometimes addressed as "God" (Ps. xlv. 6; cf. Exod. iv. 16). The argument here, however, is one that would be completely intelligible only to readers imbued with Hellenistic thought. The philosophy of the day recognised man as containing a spark of the "Divine," and the word "God" was used with remarkable freedom. Just as the Emperor, so the great philosopher could be spoken of as God¹ (Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, i. p. 119, note 2).

v. 36.—*Whom the Father sanctified*; "consecrated," set apart for the particular and unique purpose of revealing Himself. In the Old Testament instances the Word of the Lord "came" or had only a transitory connection with the persons spoken of. The connection is not transitory in Jesus' case. We may compare the thought in the word "fulness" (i. 16), and the closing words of v. 38.

(b) *By sign*; the testimony of the Baptist, and the belief of many (vv. 40-42).

¹ "The gods do not scorn our effort, no, nor grudge us the reward. They say 'Come in,' and stretch a helping hand to would-be climbers. You are surprised that men can go to the gods? Why, God comes to men. Nay, closer yet, He comes *into* men. No mind of man is good without Him" (Seneca, *Ep.* 73. 15, 16). For the translation, I am indebted to Mr A. B. Cook, of Queen's College, Cambridge.

CHAPTER XII

II. B.

4. The Culmination of the Conflict—The Cross, xi. 1-xii. 36.

(1) The Raising of Lazarus, xi. 1-46

I have thought it best to give, first of all, an exposition of the passage as we have it, reserving for the end any suggestions as to historical difficulties.¹ One difficulty, however, may here be mentioned. A good deal of ingenuity has been spent in the attempt to harmonise the Lazarus story with the chronology of Jesus' life, as given in the Gospels. This seems to me a useless and unnecessary task, in view of the character of the Fourth Gospel. The Evangelist has clearly placed the Cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of his narrative, presumably for the reasons mentioned on pp. 87 f. For similar reasons he places the "sign" of Lazarus here, in order to prepare the minds of his readers for the true view of the Cross, as victory, the glorifying of the Son of God, and not as a disaster. The chronological scheme of the Fourth Gospel is unique, and cannot, except by acts of arbitrary violence, be harmonised entirely with the Synoptic scheme.

vv. 1-16.—Our chief interest lies in the explanation of Jesus' action in vv. 6, 7. Why did He delay? Two explanations may be mentioned.

1. He delayed in order that a supreme miracle might happen. He desired not only to heal the sick, but to raise the dead. One feels instinctively that any such motive is quite out of keeping

¹ For the portions of the Lazarus story assigned to R., see p. 59 and closing paragraphs of this chapter.

with the character of Jesus and with the other details in the narrative.

2. The delay may be illustrated by reference to ii. 3-5 and vii. 3-10. Note (a) The three cases have one outstanding feature in common. In the first (ii. 3 ff.) the mother of Jesus suggests to Him an action that would herald the beginning of the ministry ; in the second (vii. 3, 6) the brethren of Jesus urge Him to manifest Himself, *i.e.* to acknowledge publicly that He was Messiah ; in the case before us, a message came to Him from a family with whom He was on terms of great intimacy and affection (v. 5), asking Him to come to Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem. *In all three cases human affection sought to bring pressure to bear on Jesus in connection with His vocation, and in each case the interference is resented and repelled.* Jesus does the will of God, and not the will of men.

(b) *In all three cases Jesus in the end actually does what is suggested ;* in ii. 8 after a very brief delay ; in vii. 10 after some days' delay ; in xi. 7 after a delay expressly stated as two days. What has induced Him at length to do what is asked ? The reason can only be that He required to wait until the will of God was clearly made known—how we are not told. "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father doing" (v. 19). So here Jesus delays two days before He is assured that it is God's will that He should go to Bethany.

(c) *All the cases constitute a temptation to Jesus.* The suggestions concern His vocation as Son of God, and those who tempt Him are united to Him by ties of affection. A man's subtlest temptations may come from those he loves and who love him, and Jesus was "tempted" in all points like as we are (Heb. iv. 15). The temperament of Jesus which rejoiced in the companionship and friendship of men and women, in the special friendship of one or two, and in the affection of little children, did not exclude a certain detachment from and disregard of social relations, especially the most intimate, when these conflicted, as they sometimes did, with His divine mission (Matt. x. 37 ; xii. 48). This aspect of the character of

Jesus has been most vividly preserved for us by the Fourth Evangelist.

Regarding no aspect of His divine vocation is Jesus so sensitive as in regard to the sacrifice which God meant to crown His mission. His anger against Peter (Matt. xvi. 22) is the sign of an inward alarm at the strength of the temptation, coming as it did from one of His own beloved circle, to forego the Cross. Precisely in His love was He specially open to the attack of temptation. Peter's suggestion was that He should avoid a violent death, and the attitude of the twelve, voiced by Peter, is reflected in John xi. 8. The real temptation, however, in this case is to bring His death nearer, before the time appointed by the Father. It came as a summons from the family at Bethany to come to their aid at a moment of deepest need, which would entail again setting His face towards Jerusalem. By this time Jesus must have been convinced that the end was imminent, and that He must die on the Cross, but He would not take a step towards bringing nearer the supreme moment without a clear indication of the will of God. Is that will made known in the summons to Lazarus' sick-bed? Shall He go at the prompting of human affection—His own love and their trust? *This is the significance of v. 5 and the two days' delay.* The meaning is brought out clearly in v. 4, where Jesus says, "This sickness is not unto death" (not merely with the death of Lazarus as an ultimate end, but with another end in view), "but for the glory of God, *in order that the Son of God might be glorified through it.*" The concluding sentence is an expansion of the words "for the glory of God," and refer to the Cross (see pp. 162 f.). "Glorify" is one of the terms so used by the Evangelist. In prayerful communion with the Father during these two days of expectant waiting and deepest thought, Jesus resolves at length to go. The disciples endeavour to deter Him, and He replies in the words of vv. 9, 10. "To walk in the day" is to walk in the light of God's revealed will, and the sentence means that death cannot happen to Him sooner or later than God appoints. As they go, Jesus mysteriously receives news of Lazarus' death. He still resolves to go,

that He may restore him to life (*v.* 11). The disciples misunderstand His word, and again endeavour to dissuade Him by suggesting that Lazarus is on the way to recovery. Jesus, in His reply, sees an ever deeper meaning in the delay. The greater "sign" of raising from the dead will strengthen their faith (*v.* 15). In no mood of expectant faith, but in loyal despair, Thomas urges that they go and share the fate of their Master (*v.* 16).

vv. 17-32.

v. 17.—The Jewish belief was that *after the third day* the spirit finally left the body, which had become unrecognisable. Lazarus, therefore, is really dead. We are prepared for a mighty miracle.

v. 20.—The sisters are true to their characters in sorrow as in joy; Martha's practical nature shines here (Luke x. 38).

v. 24.—Martha speaks as though the words of *v.* 23 were precisely what friends (*v.* 19) had been constantly saying to her. She desires more than conventional comfort of this kind.

v. 25.—She receives it in this great identification of the person of Jesus with Resurrection and Life. Both Lazarus and she are one with Him in faith, and therefore Lazarus must still live, and like Martha, "who lives and believes on Him," shall never die.

v. 27.—This produces an earnest confession of personal faith on Martha's part. Note that "I believe" (A.V.) is a perfect and almost untranslatable in English. It is a complete present, "I do believe."

v. 28.—*Secretly, i.e.* without any one knowing. The message is to be conveyed so as not to attract the attention of the other mourners, and rouse excitement. He remembers Martha's impetuous nature.

The Master: the name by which Jesus was known in the household (*cf.* xx. 16); lit. "Teacher."

v. 32.—Mary, true to her character, falls at His feet weeping, and can only echo Martha's words, which during these sad and anxious days had often been uttered between them.

vv. 33-44.

v. 33.—*Weeping* or “wailing.” The implication seems to be that the lack of that faith which Martha had shown (v. 27), evinced in the wailing, necessitates the “sign.”

Groaned in the spirit and was troubled; rather, “chafed in spirit and was disquieted.” The R.V. margin, “was moved with indignation in the spirit,” is too strong. The Greek for “was troubled” is really “troubled himself,” as if to emphasise that Jesus is not merely acted upon by the intensity of the grief around Him, and the sadness of the occasion, but Himself “entered into” the situation, as we might say, retaining perfect self-control. The description is redeemed from artificiality by the statement that “He chafed in spirit,” *i.e.* in the very depth of His nature. Not only the impotent grief of the mourners, but their lack of faith moved Him. Compare the advice of Epictetus to one who goes to comfort a mourner, quoted p. 32.

v. 34.—Jesus’ omniscience (ii. 25) does not exclude the necessity of asking a simple question.

v. 35.—*Jesus wept*; a different word from that used in v. 33; tears of human sympathy. The Greek might almost be translated, “tears fell.”

v. 36.—The tears are interpreted in two senses, in characteristic Johannine fashion, (1) As a sign of His love, (2) As a sign of weakness.

v. 37.—Discredit is again thrown on the miracle of chapter ix. as well as on that about to be performed.

v. 38.—*Again chafing within Himself*. “Again,” because of the faithlessness just displayed by the “Jews.”

v. 42.—A rather startling verse. It seems at first sight to suggest something theatrical in Jesus’ prayer. The Greek, however, for “I said it” is really one word, “I have spoken”; *i.e.* so that all might hear and believe that the power He is about to exercise is not His own, but God’s (*cf.* v. 19).

v. 44.—There is here a miracle within a miracle. Lazarus’ feet are bound, and yet he comes forth. How the writer imagined the scene to himself it is impossible to say. The contrast is striking between Jesus’ words here and those in Mark v. 43.

I believe that the historical fact which lies behind the narrative is a story of the same character as the raising of Jairus' daughter. The suggestion is that **R.** has transformed, especially in *vv.* 38-44, the raising of Lazarus from his death-bed, into the more stupendous miracle of reviving a putrefying body. The passages assigned to **R.** will be found on p. 59. In the case of *vv.* 38-44, **R.**'s work and the original Johannine material are inextricably intermingled. In the account, as we have it, the miracle is performed before a crowd, and in public. Evidently **R.** felt that the story must be altered so as to take the place in his chronological scheme of the Cleansing of the Temple, which, in the Synoptics, provokes the hostile attention of the authorities. Note his use of the "crowd" in chapter xii.

Does this seem to cast discredit on the whole Gospel? We must remember that the whole Gospel should be regarded as a series of Johannine memoirs or *memorabilia* of Jesus, which are dealt with in that symbolical fashion, which was a feature of Christian preaching and teaching in the Evangelist's time. It would be quite intelligible to an audience of Asiatic Greeks, however startling it may appear to us that the historic truth should be so manipulated.¹ The Rabbis had already so dealt with the historical narratives of the Old Testament, and Philo had made such treatment of the Old Testament familiar to Greek-speaking Jews. We have also to remember that where there is the recounting of the miraculous, there always goes with it the tendency to heighten the miraculous element. The tendency is strengthened in the case of the New Testament miracles, by the fact that they have been recorded by men whose minds were "steeped in the Old Testament and for whom the Old Testament was the standing model, whose thoughts naturally ran into the moulds which the Old Testament supplied" (Bishop Gore's *Challenge to Criticism*, by Professor Sanday, p. 24). Compare 2 Kings iv. 18-37, 38-41, 42-44 with

¹ Remember that there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of the writers, and that we are moving in an atmosphere of literary ethics entirely different from our own; see pp. 61 ff.

John vi. 1-14. The supreme miracle is the person of Jesus, and no Old Testament "moulds" could be found into which thoughts about Him could be run. We have seen how the idea of the Messiah was not large enough to express Him, and how His own consciousness overran that mould, and found it incapable of containing His real significance for men. A narrative like the raising of Lazarus, even though it may contain what is actually unhistorical, at least testifies to the conception and experience of Jesus held by the Evangelist, and by the Church in whose name he often speaks. Those who cannot accept the historic truth of such a miracle must be defended from the most unfair charge of rejecting the miraculous *in toto*. As scientific and yet reverent students of the Bible, we must, when we are considering each miracle, not only require evidence that the power of God has transcended natural law as we know it in this or that instance, but consider whether it was His *will* so to do (*cf.* Wendland, *Miracles and Christianity*, pp. 22-51).

CHAPTER XIII

II. B.

4. The Culmination of the Conflict.

- (2) Other Aspects of Jesus' Death, xi. 47-xii. 36
Evangelistic Summary, xii. 37-50

Aspects of the Cross, xi. 47-xii. 36.

(a) *Jesus' Death as determined by the Ecclesiastical Authorities* (xi. 47-57).

v. 45.—*A Council*, i.e. a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

v. 48.—*Our place*; Caiaphas and his party held their ecclesiastical position at the will of Rome. Should a popular Messianic rising occur the Roman Government would interfere. The "place" is probably the Temple and all it stood for, as the centre of the hierarchy. The Sadducean party were in power, and they held their position largely by subservience to Rome.

v. 49.—*That (same) year*; (compare v. 51). This does not mean that the high priesthood was an annual office; paraphrase as "that fateful year," and take the words with what follows.

v. 51.—There is a deep irony in the Evangelist's words.

Note that (1) the High Priest was the medium through which the oracles of God were communicated (Exod. xxviii. 30; Lev. viii. 8; Num. xxvii. 21).

(2) Caiaphas, as a Sadducee, did not believe in predestination; yet God uses him as an unconscious oracle and instrument.

Thus, really, the determination of the ecclesiastical authorities to put Jesus to death (v. 53) was in the hand of God, and in line with His purpose of salvation for the world (v. 52).

(b) *His death understood by one at least* (xii. 1-8).

A similar story is told in the Synoptics (Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9; Luke vii. 36). There the woman is not named and must not be identified with Mary, sister of Lazarus.

v. 3.—The “ointment” is, of course, rather a “perfume” of a very costly kind.

vv. 4-6.—The vulgarity of Judas’ words are their most striking feature. The Evangelist is even more severe.

v. 7.—*Let her alone; for she hath kept it (i.e. not used it), until the day of My burying.* Jesus has transfigured the vulgar atmosphere of criticism into one of perfect understanding. It is an example of His wonderful courtesy. The woman’s motive is shielded and interpreted. She alone, of all the friends of Jesus at this time, came nearest to understanding His purpose in laying down His life, an act that appeared, like hers, so useless and futile, even to the disciples. Mary, however, knew that love at supreme moments does not count the cost, and unconsciously, by her own instinctive act, expressed in symbol the self-sacrificing thought of Jesus. With a thrilling tenderness He utters the words in vv. 7, 8. Amid all the violence about to be done, this is the first kindly hand that has been laid upon Him. It is like an embalming of His body before the time. Note particularly the line of Jesus’ defence of her. Her act is one that has really only an artistic or æsthetic value, but, with such thoughts behind it, it becomes eternal in its significance and worth, not only to Him personally, but to the whole world (*cf.* Mark xiv. 9).

Do we appraise at its true value the artistic, mystical, contemplative, symbolic, as a means of communion with God or of understanding the supreme sacrifice of Jesus? The thoughts that filled His heart at the supper table lay too deep for words or tears, and He Himself took refuge in deathless symbols. In Mary He recognises a kindred and understanding soul.

(c) *His Death as Messianic Victory* (xii. 12-19).

The triumphal entry is recorded in all the Gospels. It is the only act of homage to Him as Messiah permitted by Jesus. He allows the homage of the people unrestricted expression.

He is really the fulfilment of their Messianic hopes, and the events that were to follow would remove all possibility of misunderstanding on their part. The Evangelist in characteristic fashion uses the incident as a "sign" of Jesus' royal position. It was His own royal act when He laid down His life. The Cross to which He goes is His throne. Note *v.* 16, where he clearly expresses that his attitude towards the incident is coloured by subsequent reflection. *V.* 19 again contains a double meaning.

(*d*) *The significance of His death for the Greek world, and for all time* (xii. 20-36).

The Greeks mentioned here are either proselytes to the Jewish faith, or Greek-speaking Jews of the Diaspora. They are simply introduced by the Evangelist and then allowed to disappear, after Philip and Andrew have communicated their request to Jesus. There follows a discourse on the death of Jesus. Our interest is fixed, not on the historical fact, but on its significance. These Greeks are symbolic of the world-wide significance of the death of Jesus. This meaning is brought out in the discourse that follows.

v. 23 ; *cf.* xiii. 31.—Their coming is the signal that the end is near, and that the Spirit of Jesus is to be set free on its world-wide mission (*cf.* vii. 39). That Spirit, however, can only be set free through His death, resurrection, and return to glory.

We are made to feel here the pressure of a problem on the mind of the Christian Church. No fact is more apparent than this that the historical Jesus regarded His earthly mission as confined to the Jews. "I am not sent save unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24). One purpose of this discourse that follows is to make intelligible to the Greek why Jesus appeared among the Palestinian Jews, instead of among the "nations" or Gentiles (*cf.* *v.* 32). Jesus Himself is to "bring" or "lead" those other sheep (x. 16), but not by means of an earthly ministry. "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified."

v. 24.—*The corn of wheat*; the words are peculiar to the Fourth Gospel and precede *vv.* 25, 26, which contain reminis-

cences of the Synoptics. Note that the analogy of the death of the corn of wheat is peculiarly suitable to Greek thought. The mysterious decay and rebirth of vegetation was at the root of the Demeter mysteries, and afforded the Greek some hint of a religious solution of the problems of pain and death. The Jew did not think in this way.

v. 25.—In the thought of this Gospel the death of Jesus not only has a saving efficacy, but it is a model for the Christian life. Note,

(a) That the word for "life" in the first part of the verse is one that means natural or physical life (*psyché*), the life of the senses; in the phrase—"eternal life," it is *zôê* (*cf.* Matt. x. 30; Luke xiv. 26, xvii. 33).

(b) That the natural life is not depreciated. It develops into "eternal life" through sacrifice: "He that hateth his life shall keep it." There is an instructive protest against the Greek conception of life "in this world" as unreal.

v. 26.—*Cf.* xiii. 16. The risen life of Jesus is shared by His followers.

Him will the Father honour: the Johannine form of the thought in Mark viii. 38; Matt. x. 32, 33.

vv. 27-30. **Is this the Johannine rendering of the agony in Gethsemane?** Is the agony a sign of weakness? (*cf.* p. 34).

v. 27.—*Now is My soul troubled.* The word for "soul" is the same as the word for "life" in v. 25 (*psyché*). It is as though Jesus were giving an example, in the death that is imminent, of "hating" His life, and the natural "life" resents it, is "troubled." Note how human the picture of Jesus' emotion is, and the indication in the words that follow, that through prayer He overcame (*cf.* Heb. v. 7).

v. 28.—*Father, glorify Thy name.* "Glorify" is here used in an ordinary sense—"make glorious" (see note on "glory," p. 75).

A voice from heaven. Such a voice is spoken of several times in the New Testament (Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5, and parallel passages; Acts x. 13, 15; Rev. x. 4, 8; *cf.* Dan. iv. 28). This idea of the "voice from heaven" was a product of the later

Jewish thought, and is found frequently in Rabbinical literature. The Rabbis called it *Bath Qol*, or "daughter voice." The notion is that God cannot be thought of as speaking to men directly. They shrank from saying that "God said so and so," and said instead that a daughter voice was given to confirm a revelation. We mean the same thing when we say that a prayer is "heard," or "answered." The Evangelist really means to convey the thought that Jesus' prayer is answered.

v. 29.—A very interesting verse. The Evangelist is indicating that two explanations are possible of the answer to Jesus' prayer: a natural one, that it thundered; a supernatural one, that an angel spoke.

Starting from the fact that prayer is answered, does God do so, by the use of the ordinary laws of nature, which He controls (*it thundered*), or by suspension of these laws (*an angel spoke*)? Note that, even although we could explain answers to prayer, we have neither destroyed the reality of prayer, nor ensured belief in it. The experience of answered prayer is the ultimate fact (*cf.* Wendland, *Miracles and Christianity*, pp. 188 f.).

v. 30.—The "voice" is for the sake of those who stood by. Jesus does not need such external confirmation. It came in order that the "people" (not "multitude" as in R.V.) might know that God's power alone enabled Jesus to conquer the "trouble" at the thought of death.

vv. 13-36. How can the death of Jesus be regarded as victory over Sin?

We shall presently see in our study of chapter xiii. (pp. 168 ff.) that the circumstances that led up to the death of Jesus are regarded by this Evangelist as due to the action of Satan, especially as incarnate for the moment in Judas (*cf.* xiii. 2, 27). He is founding on expressions that Jesus Himself used (Matt. xii. 25-29; Luke xi. 18-20). Compare also the accounts of the Temptation in the Synoptics.

To the Fourth Evangelist the Cross is the final "judgment" or overthrow of the demon world, the kingdom of Satan (*cf.* 2 Cor. iv. 4).

v. 31.—*Now shall the prince . . . cast out.* A reading is found, "cast down," which perhaps suits the context rather better in view of *v. 32*, and the contrast it implies (*cf. Rev. xii. 7-12*).

v. 32.—*Lifted up.* The Evangelist is translating an Aramaic word which can mean either "lift up" or "crucify." The Greek word ordinarily means "lift up," but there can be no doubt that the Evangelist means it to signify not only crucifixion, but also that the Cross is, as it were, the step of the throne on which Jesus now sits victorious and glorified. In order that the sense of "crucifixion" might not be missed, he inserts the remark in *v. 33*.

Will draw all men. By His death, all the limitations of His earthly life were broken down, and Jesus entered upon a universal life, whence He could hold communion with His people everywhere; more particularly the Greek world, to which He had not appeared in the flesh, and for whom John is writing (*cf. xvi. 7*). The Evangelist thus answers the particular difficulty which regarded the Cross as a defeat and not as a victory, by emphasising the victorious power of the risen life of the crucified Christ.

v. 34.—He has also Jewish objections to meet. The Cross is to the Jews "a stumbling-block." Probably the Jew might conceive the Messiah as dying a martyr's death, but not as dying a shameful death like crucifixion. This difficulty is echoed in this verse, "Who is this Son of Man?" *lit.* "What kind of Son of Man is this?"

v. 35.—This difficulty is not met by argument so much as by warning. The Jew has had the peculiar privilege of seeing Jesus in the flesh. The Evangelist always writes and thinks of the Jews as those who have rejected the light, and preferred darkness. They cannot see in the shame of the Cross "light," but only darkness.

Sons of light. "Son of" is a peculiar Jewish expression, used metaphorically to describe those who have in them the qualities *e.g.* of "light," "thunder" (Mark iii. 17); "peace" (Luke x. 6); "perdition" (xvii. 12).

Had Himself from them. Symbolical. During the whole of the earthly ministry, the life of Jesus was darkness, and not light, to the Jew ; now comes the final withdrawal.

vv. 37-50.—Evangelistic Summary of the Significance of the Public Ministry.

(1) *vv. 37-43.* A description of the tragedy of the rejection of Jesus by His own nation ; a fulfilment of prophecy. The words of *vv. 39, 40* sound very harsh to our ears. The explanation is that the Jew could conceive of nothing as happening without the act and purpose of God. He referred, ultimately, the permission of all evil to God (*cf. Job i. 6* ; see also pp. 121 f.).

(2) *vv. 44-50.* A summary of sayings of Jesus, with which we are already familiar in the Gospel. All the familiar ideas of belief, light, judgment, the dependence of the Son on the Father, reappear.

CHAPTER XIV

III. THE STORY OF THE CROSS.

1. Jesus alone with His Friends—The Betrayal Night.

(a) *A Lesson in Humility*, xiii. 1-17.

(b) *The Unmasking of the Traitor*, xiii. 18-31a.

(a) vv. 1-17.—A Lesson in Humility.

It is one of the problems of the Gospel that John omits the story of the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and gives instead this incident of the foot-washing, which teaches the spirit of humility. Probably the reason is that here (as in chap. vi. 19 f.) he has in mind certain superstitious notions as to its efficacy. Note also the thought in vi. 63 (p. 127). He wishes to emphasise that on that memorable night Jesus laid great stress on the *spirit* which possessed the disciples. Luke xxii. 24-66 indicates the probable temper of the disciples at the moment. Only, in so far as communicants possess the same spirit, have they "lot" or "part" with the risen Jesus (xiii. 8); and also are brought into vital union with Him. The readers for whom John is writing must have been perfectly familiar with the circumstances connected with the institution of the Lord's Supper. Moreover, the Evangelist had dealt fully with the inner meaning of the Sacrament in chapter vi. (see notes). This seems to me the most convincing explanation.

One other explanation may be mentioned. The Fourth Evangelist is a "mystic," who lays no stress on sacraments at all. It is contended that just as in iv. 2 he goes out of his way to assert that Jesus never actually "baptized" but only His disciples, so here he emphasises that Jesus used a second symbol, the foot-

washing, thereby removing the exclusive stress of the Christian Church on the Eucharist (*cf.* Moffatt, *LNT*, p. 389; *cf.* Eph. iv. 5). It seems, however, impossible to think that anyone who wrote chap. vi. 52-58, or the words of iii. 5, was able to dispense with the sacramental in his religious experience.

The Evangelist is anxious to emphasise the *ethical* aspect of the Lord's Supper. The mystical side has been dealt with in chapter vi. He is again, as there, opposing a tendency to a purely ritualistic or ceremonial view of it. A "rite" is, in Greek, *dromenon*, "a thing done." In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper it is by action, rather than by thought, that channels are opened up within our hearts for the inflowing of the Spirit of Jesus. *Ritus* in Latin can also mean a "custom," "habit." What we "do" in Church we should be doing in the sphere of practical conduct and to one another. The sense of the dying love of Jesus which we appropriate, or make our own in the Sacrament, is not really our own, or of any value at all, unless we translate it into action. This is, of course, to express in modern terms the Evangelist's meaning, but it is quite consistent with, indeed demands, a real spiritual experience of the presence of Jesus "in us," as its source. It is an undoubted fact that the earliest Christians found in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper a special means of realising not only the presence of Jesus with them, but that presence as of One who had died for them, and was alive again, their "High Priest." The non-Christian world, with its antagonism to the Cross as either a stumbling-block or foolishness—looking on it, as we might look on the scaffold, not of a martyr, but of a criminal—would exercise a certain pressure on Christians to ignore the Cross. Jesus Himself, we must believe, was aware of the danger to His followers. He knew *how* His own disciples thought of the prospect of such a death for Him. This was the burden of His dying words, and His last "sign" on earth. Surely He also laid infinite stress on the ethical side of the Cross, when He said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." Surely also His living presence now will be specially real to us, when we

thus, by means of a sacrament, and in the spirit of complete self-surrender, enter into the mystery of His own deepest thoughts for men, which expressed themselves in the crowning act of His Mission, the Death on the Cross.

vv. 1-5.—Before the feast of the Passover. In contrast to the other three Gospels, John makes it clear that Jesus was crucified before the Passover began. The Feast began at six o'clock on Friday evening. This would make the death of Jesus coincide in time with the killing of the paschal lamb on the afternoon of the day preceding the Passover. Remember that the Jewish reckoning of a day was from sunset to sunset. It is usually admitted that John gives the correct date (*cf.* Hastings, *DCG*, i. pp. 882-83 for a summary of the discussion on this point).

Jesus, knowing . . . girded Himself. Notice the impressive massing of motives and thoughts in the mind of Jesus, all issuing in the single act of lowly service. Commonplace acts of service require the loftiest motives if they are to be done in the right spirit.

Unto the end; rather, "unto the uttermost." The Love that was evidenced here is the same that effected the sacrifice on the Cross.

Layeth aside His garments, etc. He stood before them in the garb of a slave (*cf.* Phil. ii. 7).

vv. 6-11. The Episode with Simon Peter.

What I do thou knowest not . . . hereafter. "Hereafter" may refer to Peter's forgiveness after the denial, or just in general to that more perfect understanding of Jesus' acts which time, and the coming of the Holy Spirit gave to all the disciples. Peter, at the moment, was in no mood either to accept or to give such a service.

Thou hast no part with Me. The Evangelist is giving, as he often does, a double meaning to "wash." He means that Peter's subsequent experience of moral failure would alone secure him the place among the disciples he so loudly claimed. It is often a mock humility (really pride in ourselves) that prevents us submitting to the gracious influence of humbling

experiences. Forgiveness is at once the atmosphere a Christian breathes, and a daily experience.

He that is bathed, etc. (R.V.). Peter was already "bathed," because of his discipleship. He was indeed loyal through and through, and yet he was weak at his strongest point. They were all loyal—"clean"—men except Judas, whose treacherous purpose was already in his heart.

The "blood of Jesus" is said "to cleanse from all sin" (1 Jn. i. 7). Paul also speaks, in Rom. vi. 3, of our being "baptised into" the death of Christ, where he thinks much more of the picture than of the ritual. The love of Jesus in dying for Paul had overflowed and overwhelmed his soul like a stream of water. A similar idea is in John's mind regarding the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Peter, by his impulsive and emotional change of attitude is "bathed" already in the Love so soon to die on Calvary, and already kneeling at his feet. He has yielded himself in spirit to Christ; he must further yield himself in action. This Love must "wash his feet," remove life's travel-stains, and manifest itself in the ways of his common daily life (*cf.* note on xvii. 19).

Here especially does the Fourth Evangelist bring out the real value of the Lord's Supper to the Christian. It brings him into the presence of the dying love of Jesus, a Love that died to live, and to set free for all men the same spirit of sacrifice and service for others. This is "cleansing," daily cleansing, and the meaning is symbolised better, so John thinks, in telling the story of the foot-washing, than in merely repeating the familiar story of the institution. Only Judas missed this cleansing (*v.* 10). The sacrament must yield not barren emotion, but holy or "clean" living. To the Jew, only that life is "clean" which is worthy to stand in God's sight.

vv. 12-20.—Ye call Me Master and Lord . . . one another's feet. The real significance can only be present in our ascription to Jesus of titles in worship or praise, if we are prepared to learn the demand His Lordship makes on us. We may be very orthodox, and yet very poor disciples.

He that is sent; rather "one that is sent" (R.V.). The Greek is one word, *apostolos*, "apostle." This is the only instance of the word in the Gospel or in the First Epistle of John. Here it is not used in the official, but in the literal sense, as the noun corresponding to the verb, *apostellō*, "send," which very often occurs in the Gospel. That the Evangelist does attach some special importance to the literal meaning of the word "apostle" is seen in ix. 7 (*cf.* vi. 29; viii. 42; xi. 42; xvii. 18, etc.); and in xvii. 18, xx. 21 he compares the "sending" of the disciple to the "sending" of Jesus by the Father. "In view of the great stress laid throughout upon the sending of the Son, as involving a perfect correspondence in character, life, and utterance between the sender and the sent, we see how much is wrapped up in the 'as' of each of these passages. It is surely emptying them of their most precious and vital content to regard them as simply accrediting the disciples for their mission. It is no official commission which is given them. . . . Nothing less can be meant than that the disciples are to represent their unseen Lord in spirit and character as fully as He, when on earth, represented the unseen God." (Purchas, *Johannine Problems and Modern Needs*, pp. 91, 92.)

The scope of vv. 16, 17 is most penetrating, both from the point of view of the organisation of the Christian Church and of the individual member. They describe the standard of value by which position in the Church is determined, according to Jesus (*cf.* Matt. x. 24, xx. 28; Luke vi. 40).

(b) vv. 18-31a.—**The Unmasking of the Traitor.**

We have seen that often in the Gospel the Evangelist can be understood, only if we remember that he is really thinking of the contemporary situation in his own time, and is replying to awkward questions (pp. 26 f.) that might be asked by enemies or critics of Christianity. One of these is here dealt with—the treachery of Judas. Questions like these might be put:—

"Did not Jesus fail in the exercise of moral influence on Judas?" or, "Was not Jesus' death largely the result of the

treachery of Judas, and other circumstances, beyond His control ; yet you Christians say that He 'gave' His life voluntarily ? ”

The treachery of Judas is frequently mentioned in the Gospel. The passages are : vi. 64, 71 ; xii. 4 ; xiii. 2, 11 ; xviii. 2, 5 ; xxi. 20. Comparing all these passages together, we find that the Evangelist takes pains to make it clear—

(a) That Jesus, because of His unique intuition of the heart of man (ii. 24, 25), was not taken unawares by the treachery of Judas. He knew it “from the beginning” (vi. 64, 70, 71). It is even suggested in xiii. 27 that Jesus Himself sent him out on his nefarious errand. “That thou doest, do quickly” (“Be quick with what you have to do”). It is perhaps a little difficult for us, with our ways of thinking, to understand in what way this would meet the criticisms of opponents of Christianity ; yet, so far as we can imagine what would be said, or what kind of difficulties might occur even to Christians, these would resolve themselves ultimately into one great difficulty. “Does the death of Jesus mean that He conquered, or was conquered by evil ? ” The Devil is the originator of sin, and of Judas' sin in particular. Origen says quaintly in his commentary that Jesus used the words, “That thou doest, do quickly,” “ambiguously,” since they might be spoken either to Judas or to Satan, inasmuch as Judas is regarded as an emissary of and even identified with Satan. They are the challenge of Jesus to the “Prince of this world,” over whom He is victorious (*cf.* xii. 31).

(b) Judas is called “a devil” or perhaps simply “*Diabolos*” (vi. 70). The Aramaic form of the word is “Satan,” which is the very term applied by Jesus to Peter (Matt. xvi. 23). What Peter said on that occasion was a supreme temptation to Him, because it was uttered by one of His own disciples whom He loved, which made it all the harder to resist. In xiii. 2 it is said that *Diabolos* suggested to Judas his treachery, and in xiii. 27 the strange words are used, “After the sop, at that moment, *Diabolos* entered into him.” It is as if the Evangelist meant to suggest that the sacramental meal was

for Judas, the means of communion with "Diabolos"; Judas becomes, as it were, an incarnation of the Devil. It may be suggested that John means his readers to look on the Cross as a *temptation* for Jesus Himself. In other words, he points out to his readers that Jesus Himself felt the burden of the fact that one of His own disciples betrayed Him, as one of them once sought to turn Him from the Cross.

(c) John, in no measured terms, says that Judas was "a thief," and used to pilfer from the common purse (xii. 6). He tells us so, in order to explain Judas' mean and vulgar criticism of the anointing of Jesus. Judas' passion for money, and his habit of using money-value as a standard, prevented him from understanding Jesus. His own habit of mind had become such that he was incapable of true loyalty. It was part of John's defence of the situation to explain the motives, as he understood them, that actuated Judas.

(d) In xviii. 5, the Evangelist stresses the fact that Judas was standing there with the band of police, when Jesus voluntarily gave Himself up into their hands. That can only mean that he wishes it to be understood that Judas heard Jesus declare Himself and that Judas himself was among those who "drew back and fell to the ground." In other words, Judas was not necessary to point Jesus out; He delivered Himself into their hands.

vv. 18, 19.—Again we have the insistence on the fact that *Jesus was not taken unawares*: "I know whom I have chosen." The quotation is from Ps. xli. 9. Jesus derived the deepest consolation from Scripture in moments of great sorrow.

v. 20.—*Cf.* Matt. x. 40. Jesus has in v. 19, by prophesying the treachery of Judas, guarded the disciples against any future shock to their faith when it actually happens. The fact of the prophecy will rather strengthen their faith. In v. 20 He proceeds to encourage them, in view of the fact that they will be placed in similar circumstances to Himself, in times of persecution, when "brother shall rise against brother." They

are not to expect to be treated in any other way or received more cordially than their Master (*v.* 16).

v. 21.—*Troubled in spirit*; *cf.* notes on xi. 33 and xii. 27.

v. 22.—*Doubting*, "being at a loss." The Synoptics give another aspect (Matt. xxvi. 22; Mark xv. 19; Luke xxii. 23), where doubt is occasioned by the deepest of all doubts, doubt of themselves, and realisation of their own dark possibilities.

Note the vivid *looked on one another*, lit. "kept looking at one another."

v. 25.—*Leaning back lying on Jesus' breast*: rather, "fell back, as he was, on Jesus' breast." According to custom, they were reclining at table, supported by the left elbow, the feet stretched out behind, and using the right hand for eating. Note the two words "bosom," used in *v.* 23, and "breast" in this verse. They indicate vividly a change of position. The usual custom was that the guests lay not at right angles to the table but obliquely, which made it more convenient to reach the food. The "bosom" of Jesus does not refer to part of His body, but is the name used for the fold in the garment formed by the tightening of the girdle. "To lie in the bosom" of anyone at a feast means, as we would say, "sit next" a person. The expression must also have come to possess a figurative meaning (*cf.* i. 18). John's head would, owing to the oblique position of the guests, be on a level with (not necessarily touching) the "bosom" of Jesus in the sense given above, but when he "falls back" or "leans back," he actually touches the "breast" of Jesus. The passage bears all the marks of an eye-witness.

v. 26.—John's question was apparently whispered, and answered in a voice inaudible to the others. The attention of all of them was diverted from the main topic by the strange sight of the giving of the sop to Judas, and the enigmatic words of Jesus to him. Had they known the meaning of it all, what would have happened? Would he have been allowed to leave the room? The giving of the "sop" was a mark of special friendship. It was the last silent appeal of Jesus to the soul

of Judas (*cf.* v. 18). Contrast in your mind the feelings and thoughts of Jesus at the moment, and the sullen determination of Judas. Had Judas come to hate Jesus because he felt he had been deceived; or was he trying to force Jesus' hand? (See a fine study of Judas from these points of view in Mark Rutherford's *Pages from a Journal*, pp. 87 ff.; also *De Quincey's works* (Masson) viii. pp. 177 ff.).

v. 27.—*That thou doest, do quickly.*

"The horrible mazes and inconsistencies of a spirit which contradicts itself and strives to disobey the God whom yet it feels and acknowledges. To such a state of mind God becomes a contradiction. 'With the froward'—O how true!—'Thou wilt shew Thyself froward.' God speaks once, and if that voice be not heard, but is wilfully silenced, the second time it utters a terrible permission. God says 'Go' and then is angry. Experience will tell us how God has sent us to reap the fruit of our own wilfulness" (F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 4th Series, pp. 39, 40).

Had Judas committed himself too far with the authorities to draw back? Did he feel as though it were almost as difficult to go back as to go forward? Did he just drift farther into sin, feeling that circumstances were too strong for him? Did he recognise the love, but doubted its power, offered still to him, in the sop? (*cf.* R. L. Stevenson's Essay on Burns, in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*).

vv. 28-30.—After a parenthesis of explanation, almost as though he would turn his attention for a moment from the terrible scene in which he once played such a part, the writer sums up the black horror of it all in the words of v. 30. We see the door open, and in contrast to the light within, the outside is darkness. This symbolism is quite in the Johannine manner.

v. 30.—*And it was night*; but he tells us that it was near dawn when Peter realised *his* sin (xviii. 27). *Straightway, the cock crew* (*cf.* Mark xiii. 35). Is there not an implied contrast between the fate of the two men? One sinned through sudden moral cowardice; the other through deliberate choice. The

one sin led ultimately to the dawn of new hope and power ; the other remains shrouded in horror and mystery. Yet the same love is offered to both, and not in words, but in unmistakable signs. How differently they reacted towards it !

v. 31.—According to the re-arrangement followed, chapter xv. follows immediately after the words, *Jesus said*.

CHAPTER XV

III.

1. Jesus alone with His Friends.

(c) The Farewell Discourses.

(a) Union with Christ, xv. 1-27.

Introductory :—

(1) The Displacement of Chap. xiv.

The words of xiv. 31, " Arise, let us go hence," have always been felt to be a difficulty. It is strange that just when the discourse seems to be broken off, there immediately follows two chapters of further discourse, and the prayer of chapter xvii. Of course it is possible to suggest some psychological explanation such as that Jesus spoke chaps. xv., xvi. as He walked towards Gethsemane ; but this hardly suits chapter xvii. For those who feel that some other explanation is needed, one out of several is given in this exposition. I follow the order suggested by Dr Moffatt in his *New Testament, a New Translation*, namely, that originally chaps. xv., xvi. were inserted in the middle of what is now xiii. 31, between the words, " When therefore He was gone out, Jesus said," and " now is the Son of Man glorified."

One cannot enter here on an elaborate argument in favour of this hypothesis. For our purpose it must be tested, like all scientific hypotheses, by its ability to explain the facts. I think we shall find at least that the new order helps greatly by giving us continuity of thought in the whole of the discourses, and will materially aid our study.

The basis of the suggestion is that some pages of the original MS. became displaced, through the mistake of a scribe.

The arrangement of these chapters in our Bibles carries with it the following minor difficulties, all of which are removed by the suggested rearrangement.

1. It is strange that a long discourse should follow the words of xiv. 30, "hereafter I will not talk much with you."

2. Why should Jesus speak as He does in xvi. 5, if xiii. 36 and xiv. 5, 6 have gone before?

3. The simple utterances of xiii. 33, xiv. 18, seem much more in place after, and not before, Jesus has given the comforting explanation of "the little while" in xvi. 17-22.

The order therefore that we shall adopt in our study is the following: xiii. 31a, xv., xvi., xiii. 31-38.

(2) The General Character of the Farewell Discourses.

What has already been said in connection with the Discourses in general should be referred to (pp. 5 f.). We must also recall the general principle on which the Evangelist proceeds. He has in view not only what Jesus said, but what is the inner meaning of His words for the situation in which the Church of His day found itself.

It will be noticed that a good deal is said about persecution, and the disciples ask Jesus questions which are just the kind of perplexing questions, as we shall see, that Christians asked then, at the time the Gospel was written, and are asking now, though perhaps in other forms.

These valedictory discourses have taken shape through the welding together of recollections of the closing days, suggested by the desire to make plain to the early Church that her present condition of anxiety and distress was anticipated with solicitous forethought in the prophetic words of the Saviour. The prayer in chap. xvii. is the prayer of One who has become the Great High Priest of His Church and of humanity. It is not possible to deny that the mind of the Evangelist had a place in the composition of these discourses and even of the prayer in chap. xvii. The faith of the Early Church was always sustained by the thought that Jesus "ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25; cf. Rom. viii. 27, 34; viii. 26; xi. 2).

The gift of the Holy Spirit illumined the Evangelist's mind. Inspiration means that God takes possession of the whole personality of the sacred writers, and in so doing does not quench their individuality. Read the words of 2 Tim. iii. 16 as given in the R.V., which are the charter of our freedom to interpret all Scripture, from Scripture itself, and not in obedience to preconceived notions. The spiritual equipment of the Evangelist is the guarantee for the fidelity of his psychological attitude as a "witness," and we must be prepared to trust not only the man himself, but above all his peculiar and intimate knowledge of the mind of Christ.

Chapter xv. may be thus divided for purposes of study. It is interesting to notice how the thought develops in natural sequence, if we suppose that it starts with the departure of Judas from the room.

(1) *A warning against apostasy from Christ (vv. 1-8).*

Fruit-bearing, a sign of union with Christ ; its conditions.

(2) *Brotherly love is the bond of union in the new society (vv. 9-17).*

Note that xiii. 10, 11 is echoed in xv. 2, 3 ; xiii. 17, 18, in xv. 4, 5 ; xiii. 18 in xv. 16 ; xiii. 16 in xv. 20.

(3) *Persecution (vv. 18-27).*—The love of the disciples is contrasted with the hatred of the world.

vv. 1-8.—A Warning against Apostasy.

v. 1.—In the language of the prophets the Jewish nation was spoken of as God's "vine" (Isa. v. 1-7 ; Jer. ii. 21 ; Ezek. xv. 1-6, xix. 10-14 ; Ps. lxxx. 9-16). We may compare also such passages as Matt. vii. 16-20 ; xv. 30 ; xx. 1 ; xxi. 28-43 ; xxvi. 29 ; Luke xiii. 6-9. These passages bring out clearly the difference between the parabolic language of Jesus in the Synoptics and in John (*cf.* notes on chap. x.).

True : "real," "genuine" ; *cf.* vi. 32, "true bread."

v. 2. *Every branch in Me*, etc. Apostasy like that of Judas must, as we have seen, have raised many perplexing questions in the minds of Christians. John explains it for them by this allegory of Jesus as vine-dresser. The husbandman has been

tending his vine, *i.e.* the Christian Church. He takes away, or cuts away, the branches that bear no fruit. Remember what the fruit is: it is the "love" of which so much is said later on in the chapter, which Judas in particular had lost. Is this a hard saying? Remember one or two points in your judgment of it.

(1) That the Evangelist is speaking principally of Judas, and we have already seen that Judas was not separated against his own will, but by his own inclination. He found it easiest to drift.

(2) That he is not speculating, but dealing with an actual concrete case, after it had happened. He must have known, as his readers must have known, other cases like it. *Why is it allowed to happen?* He does not know: his symbolic description of Judas' apostasy was that it was night. It was all dark.

(3) To a Jew everything that happens must be related somehow to God. It must be in accordance with the will of God, even although the human will has played its part. The apostasy of Judas, for example, had its sources within the man himself. He has ceased to bear fruit, ceased to carry out the mission for which Jesus intended him. The mission of the Apostles is described as "fruit-bearing" in *v.* 16. Hence this is the action of God, as the wise Vine-dresser. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away." Even God cannot, or will not save any man against his will.¹

Every branch that beareth . . . more fruit; "cleanseth" or "pruneth" it; cuts away the useless shoots from the branch which absorb the sap. Such a process took place in Peter's case.

v. 3.—*Clean through the word.* The "word" of Jesus cleanses. None could hear Him speak like these disciples,

¹ In my experience of Bible circles there has usually been much heart-searching about the question of free-will and predestination. To most it seems unfair and unjust. The Evangelist is not concerned with the philosophical question, and confines himself to concrete cases. That men do apostatise is matter-of-fact, and each case must be considered on its own merits.

follow Him through all the fluxes and refluxes of His thought, without being better men.

v. 4.—Abide in Me, and I in you. Do not put too mystical an interpretation on this "abiding" in or union with Christ. It is more a matter of will and moral effort than of feeling, though the latter is necessarily a part of it, as well as thought. "Abide" = "remain." The Evangelist himself is drawing his own life from Jesus as he speaks. To be "in Christ" (in this Gospel) is just to accustom oneself to breathe the atmosphere of the moral standard Jesus has set, both in our own inner life and in our attitude towards men and things, to develop within us a set of Christian instincts.

v. 5.—Note also that the effort is not all on the human side—not nearly all. Christ does the part also, "I in you." Cf. *v. 16*, "apart from Me, ye can do nothing."

v. 6.—Compare Matt. xiii. 30, 40, 41. The imagery is still taken from the vineyard.

v. 7.—If ye abide . . . unto Me. Note (1) *The substitution of "My words" for the "I" of v. 5.* John's thought constantly moves in circles. In this case the circle narrows itself from the vaguer conception of Jesus Himself abiding, to the abiding of His words. It was in His words that these men experienced the power of His personality. So with us, who have not seen Him.

(2) *Omnipotence in Prayer.* A difficult subject. In true and perfect communion with Christ, only such desires are possible as are in accordance with God's will. It is striking that alongside fruit-bearing in *v. 16* is again set this omnipotence in prayer. This is itself part of the "fruit." The fruit of a Christian life is not conceived as exhausted even in deeds of love. Intercession is part of a Christian's mission.

vv. 9-17.—Brotherly love.

v. 9.—Even as the Father . . . loved you. Collect other instances in these chapters where the relationship between Jesus and the Father is paralleled by the relationship between Himself and men. Note also that where these occur, the purpose is not to set us asking, "Are we then divine, as Jesus is divine?" but rather to make us exclaim in wonder, "Behold

what manner of love " (1 John iii. 1). He wishes to emphasise the invincible strength and unutterable reality of the bond that unites Jesus with His disciples: a bond that can be resisted, but never broken. It is the source of brotherly love (*cf.* 1 Jn. *passim*).

v. 10.—*The commandments* of Jesus are all summed up in the great commandment of "love" to men. This "love" is not a vague and expansive feeling, but rather an attitude. It has to be applied unweariedly in case after case, according to circumstances, day after day. It is therefore always "new." It is not love of "humanity" but love of "men."

v. 11.—*My joy*: "the joy which I Myself have." It is a joy that springs from faith or trust in God, and is in its essence a sense of victory. Nothing is impossible to it. It is a sense of absolute security or salvation in the presence of the powers of sin and death. In the Fourth Gospel that power is personified as "Diabolus," the Prince of the world (*cf.* xiv. 30). Paul shows this joy in Rom. viii. 35-39. This is the note of the early Church always. It is the result of the coming of the "kingship," a kingdom of God in Jesus in their own hearts. Jesus Himself has it, through His perfect communion with God, and therefore can give it (*cf.* Matt. xi. 27-30).

v. 12.—*Even as I have loved you*. The measure of His love is given in v. 13, a lofty standard.

vv. 14-16.—*My friends*. "Friend of the Emperor" was an official title, like Privy Councillor, granted to distinguished people by the Egyptian Kings and Roman Emperors. The term "friend of Christ" is found in the writings of the Fathers, just as "friend of the Emperor" is found in inscriptions (Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 383; *cf.* *Bible Studies*, pp. 168 f.). Probably there is some reference to this usage here. Note the combination of majesty and tenderness in the word. Jesus elevates His disciples from the rank of "servants" or "slaves" to the rank of "friend." Think that many of the early Christians were actually slaves, and what words like these must have meant to them! Think also of the meaning that "redeemed" must have had.

We may be sure that John is reading a great deal of his subsequent experience into these words. He has not merely been entrusted with a fixed and unalterable message, like a slave, but that message has taken shape in his own experience, as he came in contact with the new world. He constantly speaks of "remembering" the words and life of Jesus in this sense (*cf.* ii. 17, 22 ; xii. 16). Ponder the words, "all things . . . known unto you," from this point of view.

v. 16.—Ye did not choose Me. The bond between the disciples and Jesus is not forged by them, and therefore it is not for them to loose it—an indispensable element in every call to Christian service (*cf.* Jer. iv. 10).

*v. 17.—*The import of what has gone before is here summed up. To enter on loving service needs the compulsion or "constraint" of the love of Christ if it is to be done thoroughly and unweariedly (*cf.* note on xiii. 4). (Westcott, however, connects *v. 17* with what follows ; see his commentary.)

vv. 18-27.—Persecution.

The early Christian must often have wondered that the "world" was so incensed by the message of Jesus (1 Peter iv. 12). The Gospel of Christ is, after all, like the Ten Commandments, an infringement of personal liberty. It is touching to realise, as we do here, that Christians really *felt* the force of persecution for Christ's sake. When they were pricked, they bled like ordinary people. How much can you or I bear even of disparagement, intellectual or social, for the sake of our religion ?

The Evangelist proceeds to give one or two sayings which would strengthen the Church under persecution.

(1) *v. 18.—Jesus Himself was hated.* *Cf. v. 20.* The Cross was, humanly speaking, partly the result of indifference, partly of compromise and cowardice, partly of active hatred.

(2) *v. 19.—This hatred is really a sign of the supernatural origin and mission of the Church.* The separation between Church and world was much clearer outwardly than it is to-day. The inward separation of character must be as clear to-day as ever. "Ye are not of the world" is for us, most

often, rather an inward venture of faith than a call to outward separation.

"Cowardice, like faith, its great antagonist, is not ultimately evinced in feeling one way or another, but in action. It is whenever a man declines a task which he believes, or even suspects uncomfortably, that he was meant to face; whenever he looks along the way of faith, and thinks it will ask much of him, and takes the way of comfort and security—the way where he can be sure of continuous company and indisputable common sense. It may appear either in action, or in refusing to act, according as the demand of faith is for patient waiting or for prompt advance; but the central wrong of it is the withholding of the service, the self-sacrifice a man was born and bred and trained to render" (*Studies in the Christian Character*, by Francis Paget, D.D., pp. 104 f.; see also the sermon in the same volume on the "Sanity of Saintliness.")

(3) *v.* 21.—*This "hatred" is the result of ignorance of God. "They know not Him who sent Me."* The thought in *vv.* 21-27 is a little disconcerting. The same tragic note is struck as in *i.* 11. The rejection of Jesus by the Jewish nation is specially thought of. Two ideas in particular need to be explained:—

(a) *v.* 23.—*How can anyone be said to "hate" God?*

The word "hate" is used in Luke xiv. 26 of the action involved in breaking family ties for Jesus' sake; in John xii. 25 of "hating" one's life. From these uses it is quite clear that the word in English can be much stronger than in Greek. In this whole passage the word alternates between the weaker and the stronger meaning. Orientals, in accordance with their greater excitability, are wont both to feel and to profess love and hate, where we Westerners, with our cooler temperament, feel and express nothing more than interest in or disregard and indifference to a thing. Yet, cannot even indifference be very cruel? From the point of view of results, say in social life, what is there to choose between the hidden enemy of indifference and the more active enemy of hatred? Does God not feel our indifference?

(2) *vv.* 22-25.—*How can a man be guilty of sin if he does not*

know ? We must carefully note what is said and what is *not* said. The graciousness of Jesus is seen in the way in which the sin is traced to its source, ignorance ; yet even such sins need forgiveness (Luke xii. 48 ; xxiii. 34). It is not implied that those who are spoken of were suffering from any insuperable hindrance to the understanding of Jesus' message. They *could* have recognised Him, and the whole history of the Jewish nation tended towards such a conception of Messiah (*cf.* Isa. liii.). Paul uses his ignorance as a plea for his past life, but not to neutralise its sin (1 Tim. i. 13 ; *cf.* Paget, *op. cit.*, pp. 154 f.). There are truths of which no man claiming to be sane or thoughtful has any right to be ignorant. "The value of the plea of ignorance depends on the whole history of a man's past life ; on the light that was about him or within his reach at the time when he went wrong ; on the wilfulness with which he went into temptation ; on the carelessness with which he missed or slighted the safeguards which would have kept him right" (Paget). We must also remember in the whole discussion that although it is the sin of rejecting Christ that is spoken of, He is not regarded as presented in the form of a dogmatic proposition, but presents Himself in doing "the works which none other man did." Have we any moral right to be ignorant of Jesus when all history rings and echoes with His deeds, and their verification in the testimony of His followers ?

vv. 26, 27.—The "Comforter" ; see pp. 184 ff. The disciples themselves are "guarantees" or "witnesses" in their lives for the reality and the claim of Christ.

CHAPTER XVI

III.

1. Jesus alone with His Friends.

(c) The Farewell Discourses.

(β) The Work of the Holy Spirit, xvi. 1-15.

(γ) The Second Coming, xvi. 16-33 (*cf.* xiv. 16-26).

The Work of the Holy Spirit.

vv. 1-6.—Here, there is a good deal of repetition of thoughts that are already included in chap. xv. Jesus still further strengthens the hearts of His disciples against the trials that are to come.

v. 2.—*Whosoever killeth you, etc.* There is a Jewish saying which runs, "Whoso sheds the blood of the unrighteous offers a sacrifice to God"; *cf.* the words of Caiaphas in xi. 50.

v. 5.—*None of you asketh me, etc.* The spiritual world into which Jesus was about to enter was as yet unreal and uncertain to the disciples. They had no idea that He was entering into His Kingdom. Jesus is spoken of as "at the right hand of God." That means that He is on the throne of the Universe. These are but feeble verbal attempts to express what is matter of fact, if we observe the story of missionary enterprise, or the history of the Church, or the experience of countless individual Christians.

The exclusive interest, which we often find to-day in the historical Jesus, as distinct from the risen Jesus of personal experience, is an example of the refusal to ask the question, "Whither goest thou?" On the other hand the practice of

prayer, the exercise of faith, and belief in the absolute supremacy of the moral ideas of Jesus, as applied to present circumstances, are illustrations of the mood that Jesus is here seeking to inculcate. We simply cannot understand Jesus, and the mind of Jesus, unless we take into account that He Himself did not regard His earthly life as a sufficient revelation. We must not only follow Him in act, but also in thought.

v. 6.—Sorrow hath filled your hearts. Note that the "sorrow" of which Jesus speaks is twofold. (1) It is due to their deep affection for Him, and the prospect of losing Him. (2) It is partly intellectual; they are baffled in presence of the unseen and the unknown. Realise that Jesus tenderly recognises and sympathises with both moods. Ask yourself this question: "Have I allowed His personality, as it is depicted in the Gospels, to make the same impression on me as on them?"

Are you also willing to let Him speak to you about your intellectual difficulties, and at the very lowest, are you willing to give that great hypothesis of the Fatherhood of God for which His whole life stood, the same trial by experiment as you give to any other?

vv. 7-15.—The Paraclete.

The disciples feel themselves on the losing side; the world will prove too strong for them. There can be no doubt that their "sorrow" of which Jesus speaks arises chiefly and consciously from the foreboding that without their Master only disaster to the cause can be expected. Only with this in view can we understand the whole passage, *vv. 7-15*. The essence of the teaching is that the Holy Spirit is to take the place in their experience that Jesus did upon earth. The idea is also that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus will take a larger place in their lives, and a more decisive place in history than was possible while He is still on earth (*v. 7*). The conception of the Fourth Evangelist is that the death of Jesus means the breaking down of those limitations of space and time and power which were necessarily involved in the earthly life. "He had revealed Himself under conditions of space and time, and only a chosen few could know him, and their knowledge

at the best was partial and imperfect. By His death all the limitations were broken down. He emerged from the narrow earthly life into a universal life, and could henceforth hold communion with His people everywhere as He had once done with His immediate disciples. He was restored to the fulness of His pre-existent being, while He carried into it those other attributes He had worn as Man" (E. F. Scott, *VFG*, pp. 51 f).

Let us try to centre our thoughts on the passage around the two names that are here given to the Holy Spirit; *The Paraclete* (A.V. "Comforter"),¹ and *The Spirit of Truth*.

(1) *The Paraclete*; (*cf.* xiv. 16, 26, xv. 261; 1 John ii. 1). The word is a Greek one that means "one called in to aid" (Lat. *advocatus*; so translated in 1 John ii. 1). It is really a legal term. In a lawsuit both the plaintiff and defendant called in their friends to aid them in various ways. The idea here is of one who champions the disciples in their conflict with the world (*cf.* Mark xiii. 11; Matt. x. 20; Luke xxi. 15). John's idea, however, is broader than the Synoptics'. The Spirit not only enables them to make a successful verbal defence, but vindicates in action their cause against the world. The Paraclete also pleads Christ's cause with the believer (John xiv. 26).

v. 8.—The Spirit is said to do three things.

(a) v. 9.—*Convict* ("reprove" A.V.) *the world in respect of sin* (R.V.).

The meaning is that the judges and magistrates before whom they are taken will condemn them as wrong-doers, and think they are acting righteously. The work of the Spirit, however, in what it accomplishes in men's lives and hearts will show that the persecutors representing the world or spirit of the age, have condemned what is good. They will then be the accused, and the Spirit the accuser. They are convicted of sin; in judging they are judged by subsequent history and experience. The grounds of the conviction are defined in v. 9,

¹ "Comforter" is used in the old sense = "Strengtheners" (see Westcott's note, *Commentary*, p. 211).

“of sin, because they believe not in Me.” The Spirit makes plain in history who Jesus is, and what He stands for in men’s experience, and this clear testimony is refused.

(b) *v. 10.*—*Of righteousness, because I go to the Father.* Through the gift of the Spirit the disciples became convinced of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. This was a proof not only that righteousness was on the side of Jesus, but that He Himself was what He claimed to be. *Cf. viii. 21 ; Acts ii. 36, iii. 15 ; Rom. i. 4.*

(c) *v. 11.*—*Of judgment because the Prince of this world hath been judged ; cf. xii. 31, 32.* The death of Jesus is, in the Johannine thought, the overthrow of the kingdom of evil or of Satan. The work of the Spirit in the history of the Church verifies this. Evil is a losing cause.

(2) *The Spirit of Truth.*

v. 12.—*I have yet many things, etc. ;* a clear statement of the principle on which this Gospel is written. The Spirit has revealed to the Evangelist the whole truth about Jesus, and under His guidance, and in fulfilment of His promise, he has given us the narrative and the teaching in the form in which we have them.

Have we any right to say that this gradual unfolding of the truth has ceased, or that the Spirit does not now guide the minds of those who interpret and apply the fact of the person and the teaching of Jesus to our modern life ? The words are a charter of liberty of interpretation from the hand of Jesus Himself.

Ye cannot bear them now. The teaching of the Spirit is always in proportion to the receptivity of men. As God has used the co-operation of men in the making of Scripture, and in the recreating of human life, so He makes use of the same in the interpretation of it.

v. 13.—*He shall not speak from Himself.* Jesus does not speak from Himself (*vii. 17, xiv. 10*). In other words it is God Himself who speaks, and the message is therefore to be trusted.

Things that are to come ; the Spirit’s message is one of hope and victory for the future.

v. 14.—*He shall glorify Me*; the glory of Jesus is His character and nature. “Glorify” in this Gospel means that Jesus is seen as He now is, in His death, resurrection, and ascension. For the Evangelist these are not really three separate events, but one, the “glory” of which is always being displayed in the experience of the Christian Church (see note on “Glory,” pp. 75 f.).

v. 15.—*Cf. xiii. 3, xvii. 11.* The thought is the same as in i. 3, 4.

The two conceptions, “the Paraclete” and the “Spirit of Truth,” are really connected with one another. One who pleads our cause is also a “helper” or “consoler”; to know the truth is the most strengthening, bracing, and comforting of experiences. We must unite in Christian thought the two ideas. Do we not sometimes feel that too much truth is dangerous? It is, if the spirit in which we seek it is hard, cold, and critical. Shall we therefore shade the truth from one another? Would you not rather have people judge you, knowing all your secret hopes, conflicts, and longings? Should we not judge in the same spirit, and does the truth not modify the severity of our judgment?

The Second Coming, xvi. 16-33 (cf. xiv. 16-26).

The thought of this chapter is somewhat bewildering. In the previous verses, Jesus has been speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit as a substitute for Himself. Now He speaks of His own coming, “in a little while.” The reason for the apparent contradiction is to be found in the contemporary historical situation. In the church of the first century the belief was strongly held that Jesus would return immediately, and that the consummation of all things was at hand. John is writing at a time when that hope seems to be defeated and men are asking, “Where is the promise of His coming?” He meets the situation by identifying the coming of the Holy Spirit, which the Church has already experienced, with the coming of Jesus Himself. In his usual fashion he sets side by side in this chapter the teaching of Jesus about the Holy Spirit, and His utterances about coming in “a little while,” thereby

showing that they meant the same thing in the mind of Jesus. It would appear that sometimes Jesus used the language of apocalyptic vision as in Mark xiii., and sometimes talked simply, as here, of His return.

vv. 16-19.—In these verses the Evangelist rings the changes on “a little while,” as though he were himself pondering a familiar saying of the Lord. He also reflects the perplexity and uncertainty of the disciples, which again reflects the doubt of the Church itself. “What is this that He saith unto us?” The “little while” that is meant is the dark interval between His death, and the disciples’ assurance of His resurrection.

It is remarkable that in this Gospel Jesus confers the Holy Spirit on the disciples immediately after the resurrection (xx. 22 ; see notes). The gloomy interval of His death is for them like a woman’s travail before her child is born—soon forgotten in the joy of motherhood.

vv. 20, 21.—Sorrow is turned into joy. It is as though the Evangelist would remind the Church of his day, which had been led astray by a too literal interpretation of Jesus’ apocalyptic language, of the earliest resurrection joy. The Church was wearied with waiting, and all the trial and persecution it had to endure.

v. 23.—Prayer will bring to them that sense of complete power they have been losing. It will allay all their questionings. *In that day ye shall ask Me nothing* ; rather, “ye shall ask Me no question. The kingdom is within them, at the door, waiting to be appropriated.

The great interest that has been created in eschatology of late, in the religious thought of our day, has not been without fruit. It has directed attention to the mighty and overwhelming resources that Jesus Himself was conscious of bringing into human life. “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” not as a domain but as a reservoir of spiritual power, of which men are made completely free by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The thought of this chapter must not be regarded as the free creation of the Evangelist, but as his interpretation of the real mind of Jesus about His second coming.

v. 24.—Those who pray in the name of Jesus, *i.e.* enter fully into His mind, realising His conception of God, and seeking what He sought, are linked up immediately with the irresistible power of God. The fruit of the Spirit is conditioned by our power to receive it. Our individual power to receive it is again dependent on our capacity to unite our prayers with those of our fellow-Christians ; for the gift of the kingdom is too great for one pair of hands to hold. God has social gifts as well as individual gifts to bestow, and we can only ask them together, in united prayer, if the prayer is to be real.

The Teaching of Jesus on Prayer in the Fourth Gospel.

- (1) xiv. 13, 14, xvi. 23, 24.—*Prayer is omnipotent.* Our concern is often, What are the limits within which I may pray ? What are the things I may ask for ? These words expressly remove all limits. To pray in His name, with Him as your guide, is to realise this. To this our thought of the Universe must be adapted. Prayer is omnipotent (*cf.* Luke xi. 5-8, and note on xv. 7).
- (2) xv. 7.—*The need of abiding in Christ.* We must realise a sense of personal relationship to Jesus. To “abide in Christ” need not be interpreted in a mystical sense. A Christian may so “abide” in the market-place, or among books, or in fixed forms of prayer, as to lose touch with the mind and words of Jesus. Remember that Jesus has always said that He is to be found “in the lives of the needy,” physically or morally (Matt. xxv. 45). A selfish or self-centred life kills the spirit of prayer.
- (3) xvii. 19.—*Be ready, if need be, to answer your own prayers.* Jesus sanctifies or consecrates Himself to the service of humanity as He prays. He also prays that His disciples may be themselves “sanctified in truth,” in other words, really willing to obey (*cf.* xii. 27, 28, xvii. 1).
- (4) *United prayer* ; see note on v. 24.

v. 25.—*In proverbs.* This is the Johannine word for the

Synoptic "parable." It is, however, a word of wide meaning, and might really be translated "dark sayings." It includes not only illustrative stories but utterances like *v.* 21. Chapter x. is a typical proverb (x. 6). The apocalyptic utterances of the Synoptics, as used by Jesus, were also "proverbs" or "dark sayings."

The hour cometh.—As the Evangelist writes, the hour has come, and the Church is able to penetrate beneath the symbol to the reality. The Spirit is the Spirit of "truth" or "reality" and guides men into "*all the truth.*" They are in direct communication with God.

v. 26.—A difficult verse. The second half of the verse must be understood in the light of 1 Cor. xv. 24-28. There Paul is still writing with the near prospect of a *parousia* or second coming of Jesus in view. When that happens the *work* of Christ is ended, and His complete victory is gained. As distinct from Paul, John holds that the victory is complete on the cross (always thought of together with the resurrection). He sees the cross, resurrection, ascension, and the coming of the Spirit, not as separate events, but as one event. Compare the saying, "It is finished" (xix. 30). John does not single out the heavenly intercession of Jesus as one of His post-resurrection activities, but says instead that men will be in direct touch with God, when they pray in Christ's name. "I say not . . . that I will pray the Father for you. The Father Himself loveth you" (*cf.* Heb. vii. 25).

In Rom. viii. 26, Paul speaks of the Spirit as making intercession for men. He also says that "The Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 17). We must, however, remember that the New Testament writers are not concerned to give a fully developed doctrine of the Trinity, but only furnish the elemental facts of Christian experience of God on which that doctrine is based. Above all we must study each writer by himself.

vv. 29, 30.—The disciples are represented as saying that they do not need to ask any further questions. They forget that complete knowledge cannot be theirs until "that day," *i.e.* after the resurrection. We have seen that the Evangelist

regards the resurrection-faith as alone complete (see pp. 87 f.). They are anticipating matters and too easily satisfied. No doubt there were those in the Evangelist's day, as in ours, who felt that if only they could have seen Jesus, and heard Him speak, they would have been able to make up their minds about Him.

vv. 31, 32.—It is not so ; they must pass through the discipline of the cross ; be afflicted with fear and made conscious of their weakness and cowardice. Jesus, in the hour of His passion, is alone in the deepest sense, not only physically, but spiritually and mentally. They could not understand. Only the Father shares His travail.

Compare a striking passage in Epictetus, *Diss. i. 13, 14* : "When ye have shut the door and made darkness within, remember never to say that ye are alone ; for ye are not, but God is within and is your *daimon*" (or "spirit").

v. 33.—*That in Me ye may have peace.* This verse really sums up the teaching of the whole chapter. Note carefully what the New Testament means by peace, and what Jesus means here and in *xiv. 27*. It is not freedom from anxiety, mystery, perplexity, or conflict. It is not stagnation of soul, especially not stagnation of mind. It means victory over all that is hostile to us, in temptation or in outward trial. The temptation still tempts, and the trial still tries, but to have the peace of Christ is to be in fellowship with One who completely overcame both. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (*cf. F. W. Robertson, Sermons, 3rd. series, pp. 15 ; 5th series, p. 305*).

CHAPTER XVII

III.

1. Jesus alone with His Friends.

(c) The Farewell Discourses.

(δ) Some Current Perplexities and their Answers, xiii.

31b -xiv. 24.

(ε) A Final Promise of Peace and Victory in Presence of the Unknown, xiv. 25-31.

vv. xiii. 31b-xiv. 24.

I have entitled the first portion of this section "Some Current Perplexities and their Answers," in order to emphasise that most of the thought could spring only from the riper Christian consciousness of the Church, in contact with anti-Christian objections and modes of thought (see pp. 5, 26 f.). The section is not unique in this respect, but it may be said that here the influence of the contemporary situation is more marked than almost anywhere else in the Gospel, and its recognition more useful than almost anywhere else for purposes of interpretation.

We have already mentioned the reasons that have led to the insertion of this section after xvi. 33 (pp. 174 f.).

vv. 31-32.—*Glorified* (see note, pp. 75 f.). These verses may be taken as a general introduction to the thought of the whole section. The "glorifying" or crucifixion of Jesus is imminent. He is surrounded by signs of the approaching end, especially by the fact that the traitor is already doing his nefarious work. Remember that the Evangelist is speaking to readers who are

asked to believe that they hold communion with the glorified Jesus (see notes on chap. xx.), through His Spirit.

v. 32.—Johannine repetition. "In Himself" means that God vindicates the action of His Son, by receiving Him into His own glory.

Some Current Perplexities :—

1. *xiii.* 33-38.—Perplexing questions might be made of the following points :—The example of love to one another shown by the later Christian community—"Behold how they loved one another," said Tertullian, not ironically but in all sincerity—and the example in the first disciple circle, not only of Judas' treachery, but of Peter's denial (*cf.* pp. 211 f.); or "Such love of the brethren," it might be urged by an objector, "is really useless, and not in accord with the conception of the ideal or perfect man. It goes beyond mere 'benevolence' and becomes 'concern'" (pp. 31 ff.); or "Did not Jesus say, Whither I go ye cannot come"? *i.e.* the example of Jesus and communion with Him are unattainable in practical life.

The answer is twofold (1) *vv.* 34-35. This is "a new commandment"; the motive power is new. The love of Jesus is in them. The very "newness" of their situation has disconcerted them. We are always thinking that Christianity cannot keep pace with "new" conditions. Jesus says to them, "ye shall seek me," but not as to the Jews, "ye shall not find me" (*vii.* 34, *viii.* 21). The demands made on this love is new. The disciples are asked to love, not merely their neighbour as themselves but "as I have loved you." The Cross is the standard (*cf.* Matt. xviii. 22; Luke xvii. 4, with the request that follows in the next verse).

(2) *vv.* 36-38.—The question of Peter is directly dealt with. The Divine command is set in sharp contrast to this shining example of human weakness; yet Peter "afterwards" (*v.* 36) did follow and did lay down his life, as tradition says. Perplexity about his denial is removed by the fact that Jesus foresaw it.

2. *xiv.* 1-7.—Perplexity about the future life. Will such self-sacrificing love be vindicated in heaven? The disciples

are asked to banish all "trouble" or disquiet, and to believe in Christ; trust Him, as they trust God.

v. 2.—Mansions. In later Jewish thought it was believed that each individual righteous man had a "mansion" or dwelling-place assigned to him, according to his worth. Jesus is thinking of this idea but transfigures it. Instead of a more or less materialistic conception of future existence, the heavenly dwelling-place becomes states of existence, rather than places. The abode is with Christ; "because I live, ye shall live also"; "that where I am there ye may be also." Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life (xi. 25). Probably *v. 2* should be read, "if it were not so, would I have said to you that I go to prepare a place for you"? Note that there are "many" mansions. The future life is as spacious and hospitable, as life at its highest is varied. There will be room for every worthy human activity, thought, or affection. Even upon earth, Jesus appealed to many different varieties of thought and outlook. The future life must be as spacious in scope and outlook as Jesus Himself. "Believe in Me."

v. 3.—I (will) come again, i.e. at their death; cf. 2 Cor. v. 1 ff.; and John xvii. 24.

v. 4.—Translate as in R.V.

v. 5.—Thomas. Cf. note on xx. 24.

v. 6.—I am the way and the truth and the life. Jesus is the Truth and the Life because He is the Way. That the "way" is the central thought, is proved by the second half of the verse. The "way" leads somewhere, and the men who follow it do not lose themselves. It is a "real way," a "true" way. Their steps do not flag; they have "life"; *cf. v. 12*. Jesus is a "living" way (Heb. x. 20) to God, unlike the dead, lifeless pavement of ceremonial approach.

v. 7 introduces again the central thought of the whole Gospel on the person of Jesus; *cf. i. 18*.

3. vv. 8-14.—The Fatherhood of God; perplexity of the practical man. Philip is a practical man (*cf. vi. 7*). He is no mystic; "show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Philip seems to stand for those to whom "mysteries" are a sealed

book. They seek some plain and evident sign of the presence of the "Father," amid much in life that is contradictory of it.

v. 9.—Jesus reminds him of their days and weeks of companionship. These meant the giving of a point of view and attitude for life. Note the way in which Jesus behaved in the midst of the painful and baffling facts of life (*cf.* Matt. vi. 26, x. 29; Luke xiii. 4; T. R. Glover, *Conflict of Religions*, p. 134).

v. 10, 11.—The "Father" is perfectly manifested in Jesus both in "words" and "works"; or as we might say, the thought and behaviour of Jesus in a world like ours is the norm for His disciples.

vv. 12-14.—The belief in the Fatherhood of God has practical results both in conduct (v. 12) and in prayer (vv. 13-14).

Greater works, i.e. their achievements through the power of the Holy Spirit; *cf.* v. 20. Because Jesus goes to the "Father" the Holy Spirit is given. The death of Jesus is the setting free of His power for the whole world. They cross the seas, overthrow the altars of the heathen gods, unite Jews and Gentiles in one Church. All missionary enterprise is part of these "greater works."

4. vv. 15-24.—Perplexity regarding the Second Coming and the Holy Spirit.

A fuller treatment of this topic will be found in the preceding chapter. These additional points may be noted here.

(a) *The coming of the Spirit is strictly conditional* (vv. 15, 21, 23, 24). The "Spirit" is no mere ecstasy, but the answer of God to moral earnestness and sincerity.

(b) vv. 18, 19.—We must suppose that these verses refer to the resurrection appearances (see notes on chap. xx.). Translate v. 19, "Ye behold me because I live, and ye shall live also" (R.V. margin). The reference in v. 20 to "that day" is of a somewhat different kind. The rather subtle distinction can only be understood after a careful study of chapter xx., and especially xx. 29.

(c) vv. 20-24 refer to that more intimate and abiding com-

munion with Jesus that is the normal experience of the Christian. It is greater than that based on special appearances, which are granted only to imperfect faith (*e.g.* to the disciples before the gift of the Spirit, and to Thomas, chap. xx.).

In that day. The reference is not to Pentecost in particular, but to the whole new "age" or *æon* that is introduced, after Jesus has gone to the Father.

v. 22.—The question of Judas implies that he regards this inward and abiding manifestation as inferior to an outward one that all might see. Judas evidently feels that it would be more effective if Jesus would manifest Himself so that the enemies (the world) might see Him. The answer is to the effect that the whole power of the Godhead ("we will come") is manifested in the individual believer (*cf.* 1 John v. 45).

A Final Promise of Peace and Victory in presence of the Great Unknown, vv. 25-31.

vv. 25, 26.—Very significant verses in view of the character of the Gospel. Three elements are said to go towards the formation of the apostolic tradition:—(a) Jesus' own words (v. 25); (b) The direct teaching of the Holy Spirit; (c) The memory of those who wrote (v. 26). The Gospel is the result of an indissoluble mingling of all three.

v. 27.—*Peace I leave with you*; Jesus' last bequest. He leaves them His "own" peace, the peace of victory. Peace is the ordinary daily greeting between man and man, but Jesus not only expresses a wish but communicates the gift. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

v. 28.—*Ye would have rejoiced.* Their love should have been such that it became joy, at the knowledge that Jesus is about to be raised above the pain and temptation of the earthly life.

The Father is greater than I; *cf.* xvii. 5.

v. 30.—*The Prince of this world cometh.* The reference is not to Gethsemane, but to the Cross (pp. 39 ff.); *cf.* xii. 31.

Hath nothing in me. See note on viii. 45. The reference is both to the moral supremacy or "sinlessness" of Jesus, and to the fact that the powers of sin and death, which as a

champion He now goes to meet as it were in single combat, have no right or means to hold Him.

v. 31.—The words are really both a comprehensive summary of the whole of His earthly life, and a final assertion of the freedom with which He goes to meet the Great Adversary.

CHAPTER XVIII

III.

1. Jesus alone with His Friends.

(d) The Prayer of the Great High Priest, xvii. 1-26.

The prayer divides itself naturally into three parts.

(1) vv. 1-8.—Jesus' intercession for Himself.

(2) vv. 9-19.—An intercession for the Disciples (except Judas v. 12).

(3) vv. 20-26.—An intercession for the Church Universal.

(1) vv. 1-8.

v. 1.—*Glorify Thy Son.* Jesus asks to be received back into the full glory which had been His before the Incarnation (v. 5). This will also "glorify" the Father, inasmuch as it will fully and finally manifest His purpose in sending His Son.

v. 2.—Another plea is brought forward, namely, that the Church, the Christian community—"that which Thou hast given Him"—may have eternal life. Eternal life, the "Spirit," can only be given after Jesus is glorified (vii. 39).

v. 3.—A definition of eternal life. It is the result of "knowing" God (see pp. 49 ff.). Note that this knowledge of God in its completeness is, (a) only obtained through Jesus; (b) that the God so known is "the only true God." This is not to deny that other religions have something of the Divine in them, but it is to assert strongly that the Christian idea of God can be obtained only through Jesus. He is "the God and Father of Jesus Christ." As Jesus is the unique "Son" ("only-begotten"), so God revealed in Him is the only Father (cf. i. 18).

v. 4.—An additional plea for the final “glorifying” of Jesus. He has “glorified” God on earth, by bringing to perfect completion His mission. Nothing is left for Him to do but to die.

v. 5.—Pre-existence of Jesus ; see notes on i. 1-5 ; viii. 52-59.

v. 6.—A final plea ; not only is Jesus’ mission for the purpose of revealing the Father accomplished, but it is complete in the sense that the disciples have made the revelation their own. The “name” or nature of God is manifested, and they have appropriated or kept His “word” or revelation.

vv. 7, 8.—An expansion of the same thought. The Greek for “words” (v. 8), is the plural of *logos*. This evidently includes “all things that Thou hast given Me.” It includes (a) implicitly, the “works” of Jesus ; (b) explicitly, the “words.” Above all, these, (a) and (b), have established them in the belief that “Thou hast sent Me,” *i.e.* in order to reveal God Himself. “They know truly that I came forth from Thee, and believe that Thou hast sent Me.” “One who is sent” is the meaning of the name Messiah.

(2) vv. 9-19.

v. 9.—*I pray not for the world.* Note that all through this section the contrast of the Christian community with the world is emphasised. There is a sharp line of separation between Church and world. We have felt this idea of separation to be present in many passages. In this verse it is so prominent, that Jesus’ prayer is expressly said to be *not* for the world. By “world” is of course meant that section of humanity in the Evangelist’s own day who have refused to believe in Jesus as Son of God, and are deliberately hostile to His Church (*cf.* notes on vi. 36-40).

v. 10.—*I am glorified in them ; i.e.* in the divine character communicated to the disciples through their belief in Jesus. The character, nature, “glory” of Jesus Himself is made known through them. The Church itself is the best proof that Jesus is alive, or “glorified,” as this Evangelist would say.

v. 11.—*Holy Father.* The epithet here applied to God is important for the understanding of the whole passage.

No Biblical word requires to be more clearly understood

than "holy" and its noun "holiness." The word is far more common in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. It is not confined even to the religion of Israel. In the Semitic religions, of which Judaism is one, the word was applied primarily to God. Originally it seems to have denoted "separation" or "distance" from human life. It expressed in one general comprehensive term the feeling that men had of the majesty, power, loftiness of God; and had at first nothing to do with ethical character. Often the deities to which the term was applied were immoral, even from the point of view of their own worshippers. A holy place, or a holy man is just one that is the special preserve or property of the god.

The Hebrew prophets were the first to apply the term *exclusively* to Jehovah. In doing so they meant to imply not only that He was "separate" from men, but also from the other deities, the gods of the nations. Jehovah alone was divine, or "holy." He is separated by an impassable gulf of awe-inspiring power and majesty, not only from men, but from all other gods. "Holiness" is not merely an "attribute" of God, but it expresses His whole nature. Cf. Amos iv. 2 and vi. 8, where Jehovah swears by His "holiness" and by "Himself," without any difference of meaning in the two passages. If then "holiness" is just a comprehensive expression for the whole Divine Nature, we can easily understand that as the revelation of the nature of God progressed in the history of Israel's thought, and God came to be known as merciful, loving, just, caring for His people, the notion of holiness would also come to have a much nobler, deeper, and fuller meaning.

The term came to be applied to anything that belonged to Jehovah, or had come into His presence. In Exod. iii. 5, the ground on which Moses is standing is "holy" ground, because there God's presence has been manifested. Similarly men were called "holy" because they belonged to Him. For example, Israel is a "holy" nation because God has chosen it in order to convey to the world the knowledge of Himself. In the New Testament the emphasis is laid on the individual rather than on the nation. The word "holy" is not often used in the New

Testament, except in one word, translated "saints." This epithet does not mean necessarily a high attainment of Christian character, but is a name for all members of the Christian community. They are so called because God has made Himself known to them in Jesus. They belong to Him ; He has "bought them with a price." They are His property, and God will therefore protect them, and care for them.

How then does the word come to involve as it does with us, and in the New Testament, a high standard of living ? The position may be put briefly when we say that if men belong to God as revealed in Jesus, a God who loves men and gave His Son to die for them, this fact involves a supreme effort on men's part to behave worthily of such a relationship. It involves not necessarily perfection of character, but perfection of moral standard. Moreover, men are not left to themselves to make the effort. God gives them His Holy Spirit, to illumine, cleanse, strengthen. Thus Christian conduct has its root in religion, a bond uniting us with God, and is not merely a system of ethics.

To pursue this subject further would take us beyond the limits required to explain the term as used in John xvii. 11. God is here addressed as "Holy Father"; not only as "Father" but as "Holy." He is "Holy," because in the New Testament while God is raised far above men in love and purity, yet His very love itself ensures that He will come to the rescue or salvation of His people from danger or from sin. We have, of course, this idea in the Old Testament also. God intervened often in their history to deliver them, notably in the great deliverance from Egypt. The supreme deliverance, however, is the Incarnation, which was foreshadowed in all previous deliverances. So here (*v.* 11) and all through the chapter, the thought of God as "keeping" the Christian community in the midst of the evil and danger of the world is prominent. Jesus hitherto has been their "Guardian" (*v.* 12). Now He is leaving them and commends them tenderly to the care of the "Holy Father" to whom they belong. This thought has been a constant strength to the Church, and to the Christian

individual, all through the centuries. We "belong" to God, and therefore we are in safety, both in this life, and the life to come (*cf.* x. 28). The assurance of "safety" rests not merely on the fact that God is all-powerful, but that He is all-loving and is bound to the Christian community by an unbreakable bond of affection (*cf.* Skinner, *Cambr. Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Isaiah i. xlv.; Davidson, *ib.*, Ezekiel xxxix.; also Art. *Holiness*, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*).

v. 12.—*In Thy name.* The "name" of God is, as it were, the fortress of His Church. "Name" is equivalent to God's personality or "reputation." God has done great things in the history of His people in the past, and His power and willingness are always the same. What we have experienced, and others have experienced of God, is our pledge and assurance, present and future (*cf.* Prov. xviii. 10; Rom. i. 5; Philipp. ii. 9).

That they may be one; see notes on vv. 22, 23.

The son of perdition; to be understood in the same sense as xii. 36. There is a play upon words, which is brought out in the R.V. "Perished" is the verb of which perdition is the noun. For the term "son of," see note on xii. 36.

v. 13.—*My joy.* The joy of victory; *cf.* xv. 11. Jesus prays that the same joy, arising from the sense of a finished work, with which He leaves the world, may find its aim and fulfilment in their hearts.

v. 15.—The presence of the community in the world is to be the standing testimony to the reality of the risen and triumphant Christ.

From the evil. The analogy of 1 John ii. 13, 14; iii. 12; v. 18, 19, points to the translation "from the evil one," *i.e.* Satan (p. 41). The vanquished power of sin is still able to harm the disciples, by way of temptation or persecution. Apostasy and the recrudescence of old habits were still possible.

v. 17.—*Sanctify them in the truth* (R.V.).

"Sanctify" is the verb corresponding to "holy." The disciples are "sanctified" or made holy in the sense that God claims them for His own possession (*cf.* note on v. 11). This it is that enables them to overcome the "evil one."

In the truth : practically the same as "in Thy name" (v. 11), with emphasis on the idea that God is the only *true* God, as distinct from the gods of other religions ; "Thy word is truth," and Jesus has given them "the word," the *Logos*, the true revelation of God.

v. 18.—*Cf.* x. 36. God sanctifies them, as He sanctified, or "set apart" Jesus, in order that they might carry out a particular mission. Their mission is to carry on the mission of Jesus. "Send" in this verse is the verb corresponding to "apostle," which is only once used in the Johannine writings (John xiii. 16 ; *cf.* note on xx. 21).

v. 19.—*For their sakes I sanctify myself.* The animal offered in sacrifice to God was said to be "sanctified" in the sense that it was given to God, acknowledged as His possession (*cf.* Exod. xiii. 2 ; Deut. xv. 19). Similarly the Priest was "sanctified" (Exod. xxviii. 41), as one whose life was devoted to the service of God. Probably here there is a mingling of ideas. Jesus is both Priest and Victim ; His sacrifice is "for their sakes." The people who offered the sacrifice were also sanctified ; *i.e.* made fit to come into the presence of God, and to become His possession. Such was the Old Testament symbolic idea. The words here imply that what has formerly been done in symbol, and therefore imperfectly, is now done in reality, or "truth." "Truth" stands without the article, and is used in the same sense as in iv. 23 (*cf.* Heb. x. 10).

Has the Evangelist any theory as to the way in which the sacrifice of Jesus sanctifies the disciples ? He is primarily dealing with actual Christian experience, and especially his own. He knows, as he writes, that God or the Spirit of God, is abiding in Him and in the whole Christian community (John iii. 24). In other words, and in less mystical language, the Christian community and every member of it, is a possession of God. That sense of security or salvation has been brought to him through the life, and especially through the death of Jesus. Both Paul and this Evangelist regard the death of Jesus as assuring them of salvation or protection from any hostile power, within and without.

It may be useful at this point to compare Paul's and the Fourth Evangelist's thoughts about their experience of what Jesus' death meant to them. All the Bible writers do not necessarily *think* in the same way about the Cross.

(a) When Paul thinks about it, he says that Jesus died "on our behalf" (Rom. v. 8). He suffered the penalty of our sins, not of His own. The innocent suffers for the guilty. He is just thinking of Christ's death as a Jew thought about the sin-offering in the Temple.

This is one idea in Paul's thought of the death of Jesus. There are indications of an even wider and complementary thought about the Atonement in his writings. He believes that when Christ died humanity was in a manner comprehended in Him, and itself died to sin (2 Cor. v. 14). At the same time he prevalently thinks of the death of Jesus on the Cross as substitutionary. Jesus died *for* us. It is foolish to talk of Paul's view as implying that God punishes Christ, or is angry with Christ, or must be appeased by a sacrifice; just as it is foolish to say that the judge is angry with the prisoner when he passes sentence. The judge is the embodiment of the moral order of society, and similarly it is God's justice or the moral order of the Universe that in Paul's view necessitated the Cross (Rom. iii. 26). "Death"¹ is to him the wages of sin, and Jesus, through love of men, bore the full penalty of that law. Also Jesus is Himself the Judge.

(b) When the Fourth Evangelist thinks about the death of Jesus he, far more than Paul, is influenced by Hellenistic thought. The Hellenist was quite familiar with the idea of God dying and thereby setting free or communicating His life to His worshippers (see p. 126). He does not make terms with it, but rather translates Jewish forms of sacrificial thought into Hellenistic. Sin, to the Hellenist, was not, as to the Jew, primarily an offence against God. It was regarded as a principle of evil within us. "The germ of badness," says one of the late Stoics, "is in ourselves, and what we all need is not so much to run away from the wicked as to follow after those who may make us clean and hinder the badness from growing in us." In 1 John. i. 6, 7, we read that fellowship with God revealed in Jesus is antagonistic to sin, and "the blood [or "life"] of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin." Similarly, in John xvii. 19 Jesus "sanc-

¹ "Death" to Paul (and to the Fourth Evangelist) is not merely physical. It is "separation from God" (cf. R. H. Strachan, *The Individuality of Saint Paul*, pp. 218 f.).

tifies" or "consecrates" Himself in death to God, and those who are united with Him are also sanctified, made fit to enter into God's very presence and to share His eternal life. To the Fourth Evangelist the death of Jesus is His "going to the Father," and His disciples are already one with Him here by the gift of the Spirit, and will also be one with Him after death, where He is glorified, and enjoys complete fellowship with God. The life of God becomes their life: even here they have become the Father's own peculiar possession and are therefore kept from the evil one (*v.* 15).

(3) vv. 20-26.

The leading idea in these verses is unity, "that they may all be one"; "that they may be one, as We are one"; "that they may be perfected unto one" (*cf.* *v.* 11). This inward unity of the Church is regarded as the great factor that is to impress the world and lead to a belief in Jesus (*v.* 21).

(a) How is this unity to be understood?

v. 22.—It is comparable to the unity that exists between the Father and the Son (*vv.* 11, 22): "as We are one." It is therefore conceived as a personal relationship of Christians to one another, a complete relationship of love, sympathy, and will.

(b) It is a unity that will grow until it becomes perfect, (*v.* 23). The Church is "perfected unto one" (not "made perfect in one," as A.V.) As Jesus has "finished" His work so far as His own earthly ministry is concerned, so that work which already exists perfectly in germ is gradually realised in the inward unity of the Christian Church.

(c) This unity is calculated to impress the world; "that the world may believe" (*v.* 21); "that the world may know" (*v.* 23). These words of Jesus are constantly quoted to-day, as though they meant a visible, external, incorporating unity; yet it is clearly stated that the unity spoken of is an *inward* unity, like the unity of the Father and the Son: "I in them and Thou in Me." No such actual situation could possibly be contemplated as ours to-day, where there exist side by side different denominations, separated from one another by questions of orders, sacraments, church government, and formal creeds. The principle may, however, be applied. Such disabling, out-

ward separation as exists to-day will only be removed by the unflinching application of the criterion of unity that is here inculcated. The basis of unity, according to this chapter, is acceptance and experience of a message and mission entrusted to the Apostles, namely, the profession of faith described in *vv.* 7, 8.

The tie that bound together the Apostolic Church was *not* a tie of outward organisation. History proves that the organisation was a gradual growth. It was a tie of common experience of salvation in the sense that, "in Christ," they were all above the reach of any spiritual, moral, or physical catastrophe, and that they had a common experience that God was abiding in each individual heart by His Spirit and manifesting His forgiveness to each. This common "creed" is stated in the simplest terms over and over again in the words, "these have known that Thou didst send Me." The unity here spoken of belongs to a much higher region than mere external unity. Unity and uniformity of worship, government, or creed, are not the same. The latter is not to be regarded as supremely desirable. Human nature and temperament being what they are, God's purposes and "means of grace" are as wide as human nature itself, and can only be fulfilled in a variety of ways. Religious feeling has so far progressed to-day that most men are perfectly willing to acknowledge that the Spirit of God is at work in every Christian church or denomination; but this is far from the real acknowledgment of unity in Christ's sense. It is sometimes spoken of as though it were an accident, or irregularity, rather than a divine purpose. The Christian Church, as we saw in chapter x., is not a fold with walls, but a flock whose unity consists in each member of it hearing and obeying the voice of the Shepherd. Are men in their respective churches really brought into living union with the goodness and the love of God in Christ? Do we all experience the same salvation, with or without orders, with or without sacraments, and are we all used as channels of the same grace to others? This alone is unity in Christ's meaning. The only deadly schism in the New Testament is to be separated in spirit or in aim

from the living Christ, and therefore from those in whom He lives and works. " Our differences do not concern the Church, but the doctrines of God and of salvation upon which our views of the Church rest " (J. Oman, *The Church and the Divine Order*, p. 3).

CHAPTER XIX

III.

2. The Separation from the Disciples.

(1) The Arrest and Trial of Jesus, xviii. 1-xix. 16.

(a) *The Arrest*, xviii. 1-14.

(b) *The Trial before Annas*, xviii. 19-24.

(c) *The Denial of Peter*, an episode ; xviii. 15-18, 25-27.

(d) *The Trial before Pilate*, xviii. 28-xix. 16.

The student will no doubt be perplexed by the many discrepancies in the various Evangelic narratives of the trial of Jesus. These need not surprise us. The narratives we have must have been founded on the accounts of eye-witnesses, and we must bear in mind that no event took these more by surprise than the arrest and execution of Jesus. They were not in a state of mind at all calculated to enable them to remember accurately what took place, and to many of the scenes they had no immediate access. The haste of the proceedings, the fear that overtook them, the overwhelming effect of "the sudden Roman faces and the noise," prevented the disciples from realising what was going on. The accounts must afterwards have been pieced together, not only from personal recollection but from information supplied by Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, some of the women and sympathisers in the crowd, and others. (A very vivid account of the historical situation can be found in Hastings' *DCG*, ii. p. 750.)

On the other hand, it became supremely necessary, as the Christian faith was increasingly confronted with objections founded on the "scandal" and "foolishness" of the Cross,

to furnish detailed accounts of the trial and death of Jesus. The Fourth Evangelist has his own point of view from which he writes.

In particular, three aspects of his thought on the matter may be noted :—

1. In Pilate we are made to feel that Jesus is confronting not only a single judge, but the power of Rome. His is a kingdom of truth, raised high above political consideration. This would be a powerful argument when His followers were arrayed before Roman tribunals.

2. In his account of the arrest and trial, the Evangelist enables us to see that the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities must carry the burden of responsibility for the condemnation. Pilate is a tool in their hands, and clearly acts against his better judgment.

3. The Evangelist nowhere uses the word "cross" or "crucify" except in this chapter. To the Greek it was "foolishness." He rather uses words like "lifted up" or "glorified" instead of crucified. This is an additional indication of the kind of audience for whom the Gospel is composed.

The Arrest, xviii. 1-14.

v. 1.—*Brook*; rather, "ravine" or "winter torrent," which would be dry in summer: another instance of exactness of detail. The "garden" is Gethsemane.

v. 2.—The Evangelist wishes to explain why Judas could guide the band so exactly; also he emphasises the depth of his treachery.

v. 3.—*Band* (literally, "cohort"). A cohort consisted of from 500 to 1000 men. Of course only a small portion is represented as acting. We talk about "the police," when we do not mean the whole Metropolitan force (*cf.* Matt. xxvii. 27; Mark xv. 16). The *posse* consisted also of Temple police.

v. 4.—The Evangelist makes much of the fact that Jesus voluntarily came forward and surrendered Himself. He has an apologetic motive. He is not simply the victim of *force majeure* (pp. 36 f.); *cf.* v. 7.

v. 6.—*Went backward and fell to the ground.* Again emphasis

is laid on this by the Evangelist for the same reason. The soldiers seem to have been taken aback by the sudden appearance of Jesus out of the darkness. The cause of the confusion may have been partly Peter's rash act in drawing a sword (*vv.* 10, 11; *cf.* the accounts in *Matt.* xxvi. 49; *Mark* xiv. 45; *Luke* xxii. 47). The whole narrative shows Jesus in complete command of the situation.

v. 9.—This "word" is spoken in *xvii.* 12. This is not the original sense in which the words are uttered in the prayer. Probably the Evangelist sees a double meaning in them.

v. 10.—Peter was no doubt aiming at his head, and cut off his ear instead. John alone tells us the man's name.

v. 11.—*The cup*; *cf.* *Matt.* xx. 22, 26, 39, 42; *Isa.* li. 22.

v. 13.—Annas had been deposed by the Roman authorities, but he was still a power.

That year. This does not mean that the high priesthood was an annual office, but "that fateful year." John ironically represents Caiaphas, a Sadducee, who therefore did not believe in predestination, as fated to speak "not of himself" (*xi.* 51), so here fated to be in office that year. John is writing from the point of view of one who knows the truth of *xvi.* 8 (see notes).

Some rearrangement of the verses here is necessary. There is excellent critical authority for supposing that *v.* 19 should follow immediately on *v.* 14, and that the story of Peter's denial should read consecutively. The order would be *vv.* 14, 19, 24, 15, 18, 25, 27. A slightly different order is followed in the Sinaitic Syriac Palimpsest (*cf.* *Light on the Four Gospels from the Sinai Palimpsest*, by Agnes Smith Lewis, p. 171). It may be impossible to determine the exact sequence now, but there is abundant evidence to prove that very early there was uncertainty in the minds of scribes.

For the order of verses in what follows see Dr Moffatt's *The New Testament; A New Translation*.

The Trial.

Before Annas. *vv.* 19-24.

v. 19.—Annas is called High Priest although really ex-High Priest. This seems to have been only an informal examination,

for the purpose of discovering material for a charge of sedition or conspiracy.

v. 22.—Struck Jesus with the palm of his hand. All this is expressed in four words in the Greek, "gave Jesus a blow." The word translated "blow" indicates a blow on the cheek or the mouth inflicted with the open hand. This could only have taken place at an informal examination.

v. 23.—Compare Jesus' words here with Matt. v. 39. The Sermon on the Mount must always be interpreted by the example of Jesus. Jesus "turned the other cheek" when He gave Himself, as He was doing, into the hands of His enemies, for the salvation of men.

v. 24.—If we take this verse as immediately preceding v. 15, the narrative reads consecutively.

The Episode of Peter's Denial, vv. 15-18, 25-27.

It was in the courtyard of Caiaphas' house that the incident took place. John omits all account of a trial before Caiaphas, as he omits other incidents in the Synoptics. He makes use only of what serves his immediate purpose and point of view.

It was important to dwell on the circumstances of Peter's denial because it must have been one of those "awkward questions" with which Christians were confronted.

Note (1) He explains how Peter was led into temptation. If the disciple of *v. 15* is also the author of this part of the Gospel, the words are really a confession of personal responsibility for what happened.

The words "known to the High Priest" have been used to prove that the mysterious, unnamed disciple of the Gospel could not have been John, son of Zebedee. It has been urged that the word translated "known to," must mean "related to." This is not borne out by the use of the same word in Luke ii. 44, where it means "acquaintance," and is distinguished from "kinsfolk." The son of Zebedee might be acquainted with the High Priest in many ways, without being an intimate friend. Caiaphas might have bought fish from him. It is significant that the name of one of the High Priest's servants, Malchus, is mentioned in this Gospel alone, and it is quite

possible that Caiaphas may have been interested in the friend of one of his servants who was also a disciple of Jesus.

(2) In this narrative of Peter's denial, it is indicated as in none of the Synoptic accounts (Matt. xxvi. 69, 75 ; Mark xiv. 66-72 ; Luke xxii. 56-62), that the first denial takes place almost at the door, when Peter has not yet recovered from his surprise at being admitted. The narrative seems to suggest that Peter, perhaps in a spirit of bravado, afterwards joins the circle round the open brazier. The whole narrative is very lifelike in this Gospel. They are different people who speak to Peter each time. One denial leads to another as they bait him. The crowning point is reached when the friend of Malchus, who saw Peter strike the blow, confronts him. Here, as in many places in the Gospel, one must feel that there is great accuracy, only possible to an eye-witness. Evidently the writer feels that the best defence of Peter is to tell the plain, unvarnished story of his fall.

The Trial before Pilate, xviii. 28-xix. 16.

v. 28.—*The hall of judgment*: the *prætorium*, or residence of the Roman governor ; probably the former palace of Herod the Great. His son Archelaus had been banished and a Roman governor installed.

Early. In all the Gospel accounts there is given an impression that both the arrest and trial of Jesus were hurried on : probably in order that His execution might take place before the Passover day, which began at 6 p.m. on the same day. It seems certain that Jesus was never legally tried before the Jewish authorities. No proper meeting of the Sanhedrin could be held sooner than 6 a.m. Its decisions were valid only if it sat day by day, and it could not sit on a Sabbath or a holy day. The probability is that a regular meeting was formally convened as day dawned (Mark xv. 11 ; Matt. xxvii. 1), which would hastily ratify the conclusions come to already by Annas and Caiaphas. The formal meeting would be held at the house of Caiaphas (*v. 24*).

v. 29.—The public proceedings took place in the open air, probably in a paved portico of the *Prætorium*. Pilate asks

for a definite accusation. What the accusation was we are left to infer from *v.* 33. The Sanhedrin really condemned Jesus as a false Messiah who had threatened to destroy the Temple (Mark xiv. 58; Matt. xxvi. 61; John ii. 19), but as that charge would have had no weight with Pilate, being a question purely of "religion" or the Law (*v.* 31), the ecclesiastical authorities subtly converted it into a charge of "high treason." They relied on a distorted interpretation of Jesus' words about the tribute money (Luke xx. 25, xxiii. 2).

The Jews reckoned the next day as beginning at 6 p.m. on what we would call the previous day, in this case Friday. The evening thus begins the Jewish day. For the various divisions of the day see Mark xiii. 35.

v. 31.—Pilate is anxious to escape responsibility if he can, and also to thwart the ecclesiastical authorities. All through, it is a case of thrust and parry between them and him. He had come into collision with these authorities before, as Josephus (*Ant.* xviii. iii. 1) tells us. We have also some indication of serious trouble in Luke xiii. 1, which refers to some riot, in the quelling of which blood had been shed by Pilate. This enmity already existing is one of the factors that determined Pilate's action, and underlies the threat to report him to Tiberius in xix. 12 (see Hastings' *DCG*, Artt. *Trial of Jesus and Pilate*).

v. 33.—*Art Thou the king of the Jews*; rather, "Thou! Art Thou king of the Jews?" a mixture of pity, contempt, and wonder.

v. 34.—The tenor of Jesus' double question is to cast the responsibility on the Jews for His condemnation. Had it not been for them, Pilate would not have spoken thus of Him. He is suggesting that Pilate is a tool in their hands.

v. 35.—Pilate indignantly parries the home-thrust: his *amour propre* is touched.

v. 36.—Jesus ignores the outburst, and proceeds to answer Pilate's first question. He claims to be king of a spiritual kingdom of "truth" (see note on i. 17).

v. 37.—Pilate's question, in the Greek, implies that he had expected and indeed hoped for a complete denial on Jesus'

part. Jesus answers rather enigmatically: "Thou sayest that I am a king"; "Yes, I am a king, as you say": a qualified "yes." His kingdom, to the founding of which His whole life had been devoted, is the truth. "Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice," *i.e.* everyone that is sincere, trusting his own good instincts and noblest desires of heart, conscience, and mind. The words are the words of One who had a mission to the whole world. They are confirmed in missionary experience everywhere. The "hearing" is not merely with the ear but so as to obey, as the Greek implies.

Note how "King of the Jews" becomes here, in the mouth of Jesus, "King of truth." The Gospel is written for an Asiatic-Greek body of readers who would not have wholly understood Jewish Messianic ideas, but who did understand that Jesus was the answer to their deepest thoughts.

v. 38.—*What is truth?* A contemptuous answer. Pilate misses the depth of meaning, and practically says, "Is that all? This then is a mere philosopher's question of truth and falsehood, and has no political bearing on the matter at issue." He goes out, his mind made up to set Jesus free as a harmless enthusiast. Note that the word is not "fault" but "crime." The charge of treason falls to the ground. Pilate sees from the general temper of the crowd that he must nevertheless conciliate them, and suggests Jesus' release, as an act of grace, in view of the near approach of the Passover.

v. 40.—The magnificent reserve of the Evangelist is apparent in this verse. His readers know all about the incident from the other Gospels. He crowds the whole tragedy of their choice into the words, "Now Barabbas was a robber."

xix. v. 1.—Scourging was the usual accompaniment of crucifixion.

v. 2.—In this Gospel they are Pilate's, and not Herod's, soldiers who mock Jesus.

v. 3.—*They struck Him*: again with the open hand. Jesus is struck twice in this Gospel: once by the hand of religious prejudice (xviii. 22), once by the hand of idle indifference. The soldiers were off duty at the time.

v. 4.—Pilate makes a final appeal to their pity, but in vain.

v. 5.—*Behold the man* : “ Ecce Homo.” Pilate, like Caiaphas (xi. 50, 51), is an unconscious prophet. The word for “ man ” which he uses implies pitying contempt : “ Behold the fellow.” Who would suspect that this pitiable figure was to outlast Pilate, and the empire he represented ?

v. 6.—The ecclesiastical authorities take pains to ensure that the passion of the mob is not turned into compassion. They raise a cry which literally translated is, “ Crucify, crucify ! ” or, “ To the cross ! ” John lays great emphasis on the part played by the priests.

We can readily understand that John, as he writes with such emphasis, has in mind the trials of Christians in his own day. They, also, were condemned solely for high treason. The Evangelist shows that this charge completely broke down in the case of Jesus.

v. 7.—In their excitement they blurt out the true charge against Jesus. “ Son of God ” to them means Messiah.

v. 8.—To Pilate, however, it means more. Does John mean that his fear is superstitious ? Perhaps also Pilate sees in the claim to be “ Son of God ” a recrudescence of the possibility of treason. Was not his master, the Emperor, the son of God, *Divi filius* ? Had he not to protect his interests ?

v. 9.—*Jesus gave him no answer* : an imperial silence. Jesus will not vindicate His claims against those of Tiberius. He has a calm assurance of the success and ultimate triumph of His cause. Jesus always *assumed* and did not assert His claims.

v. 10.—The silence of Jesus irritates Pilate’s dignity and sense of power, and he therefore *asserts* it, in striking contrast to Jesus.

v. 11.—The power which Pilate possesses over Jesus is not his own : he is permitted by God to hold it. This is in line with the central thought of the Evangelist about the Crucifixion. It is not a disaster and sign of weakness, but the will of God, to which Jesus submits, or, rather, which He does.

He that delivered Me, etc., can only mean Caiaphas. Again

the emphasis is on the sin committed by Judaism, and its responsibility.

v. 12.—Pilate is again convinced of Jesus' innocence of the charge. The mob then use their final weapon: "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend" (see p. 179). There is a covert threat in these words. Pilate may be proved guilty of high treason.

v. 13.—Some critics think that the Greek warrants the translation, "Pilate . . . led Jesus forth, and set Him on the judgment seat." There are, however, certain grammatical difficulties, and it is questionable whether Pilate would so far forget his own dignity. At the same time he is desperate in his desire to acquit Jesus and to thwart the authorities, and may have thought that this final mockery—really again an unconscious prophecy—would have gained his end.

Notice, also, how the Evangelist carefully marks the site of the judgment seat, "the Pavement," and translates the name into Aramaic, as though he meant to imply that something remarkable happened. That such an interpretation was given to the passage in the second century is proved by a passage in Justin Martyr, *Apology*, i. 35.

v. 15.—This expedient also is in vain, and the old cry is renewed.

We have no king but Cæsar. The Evangelist records these words as the crowning apostasy of Judaism. The Jewish nation had always claimed Jehovah as King; they were a theocracy. To the finest spirits among them the Roman yoke was intolerable. The words, we are made to feel, are the utterance of a nation turned traitor to its own noblest traditions.

v. 16.—Sentence of death is passed. "Thou shalt go to the cross," Pilate would say. Note the impressive way in which the words follow the utterance of *v. 15*. The Evangelist emphasises that the Jewish nation crucified Jesus by an act of treachery to God, Who was their rightful King.

CHAPTER XX

III.

2. Apparent Triumph of the Powers of Evil.

(2) The Crucifixion and Burial, xix. 17-42.

The Crucifixion, xix. 17-37.

v. 17.—*Bearing the cross for Himself* (R.V.): clearly a reference to the incident of Simon of Cyrene (Matt. xxvii. 32; Mark xv. 21; Luke xxiii. 26). John does not necessarily contradict the Synoptic facts, but points out that Jesus began by carrying the cross Himself. A certain Gnostic sect taught that Simon was crucified instead of Jesus, but that was later than the date of the Gospel. A probable motive in the Evangelist's mind would be to suggest to the minds of his readers the case of Isaac (Gen. xxii. 6). In Jewish-Christian thought, Isaac was regarded as a type of Christ.

Golgotha. It appears to be impossible to locate the site. It was evidently near the city (*v. 20*), on a road that led out through a gate in the neighbourhood of the Prætorium (*cf.* G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, ii. p. 576). Probably also it was the place of public execution, and may have been so named from its appearance as a mound with a skull-like contour (*cf.* Luke xxiii. 33; Hastings' *DCG*, i. pp. 655 f.).

v. 18.—*Jesus in the midst*: another example of the Evangelist's use of symbolic language. He draws attention to the fact that Jesus was not only "numbered with the transgressors" but that He actually shared their fate. It is a bold challenge to those who regarded the Cross as a deep disgrace.

v. 19.—The title is in three languages, which is a symbol of

the world-wide scope of the Christian faith. Pilate is again an unconscious prophet (*cf.* xi. 50 ; xix. 5).

v. 21.—The title stung Jewish pride, as it was intended to do. Had they not themselves put the charge in this way ? Also, it could be read by everyone in the crowd who came up for the Passover.

v. 22.—*What I have written I have written.* The Greek perfects bring out forcibly that Pilate regards the incident as closed, so far as he is concerned.

vv. 23, 24.—John alone tells of the seamless garment. Again he expresses a symbolic meaning. Like other incidents of the Cross, this is a sign (*cf.* v. 18). The High Priest wore a full-dress garment *over* his other clothing. It was blue, with an alternate fringe of bells and appendages like pomegranates. It was also seamless (Exod. xxviii. 31-35 ; *cf.* Jos. *Ant.* xi. vii. 4). In Exodus it is called an "ephod," and Josephus says that it was seamless. Philo also uses the seamless robe of the High Priest as a symbol of the Logos, the indestructible principle of the Universe (*De Ebrietate*, 21 ; *De Profugis*, 20). The actual garment of Jesus was, of course, an under-garment. The thought of the Evangelist seems to be that Jesus really was on the Cross the Great High Priest, bearing the sins of the world before God. Sometimes he thinks of Jesus as priest, and sometimes as victim of the sacrifice (*cf.* i. 29).

v. 25.—This Evangelist differs from the others in representing the women as standing so near the Cross (Mark xv. 40 ; Matt. xxvii. 55).

His mother's sister ; probably Salome, mother of James and John, sons of Zebedee (*cf.* Matt. xx. 20).

Clopas. *Cf.* Luke xxiv. 18, where, however, the name is Cleopas. Are they the same ? It has been suggested that the companion of Cleopas in Luke's beautiful story was his wife, but this is pure conjecture. (See Hastings' *DCG*, under *Clopas*, *Cleopas* ; Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, p. 315, n. 2).

v. 26.—*The disciple whom He loved* : the circumlocution by which John, son of Zebedee, is sometimes described in this Gospel. This is one of the vexed problems of the Gospel.

Prof. E. F. Scott, and other critics, regard the "beloved disciple" as an ideal figure, the ideal Christian (*The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 57, 144, 374).

Perhaps the strongest argument against this view is, that the unknown author of the Appendix obviously regards him as a real figure, and identifies him with John, son of Zebedee (xxi. 20). Compare H. L. Jackson, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 72.

Woman ! behold thy son : a very tender application of the wider thought of xvii. 11. "Woman" surprises us in this connection ; yet neither here nor in ii. 4 is there any tinge of reproof or severity in the Greek term (*cf.* Westcott's note on ii. 4 and on this passage). We must realise that the moment when even the dearest earthly relationship of Jesus must yield to one even dearer and greater, His relationship with the Father, had come even at Cana of Galilee. Now it need not surprise us that He so speaks when His "hour" is indeed come ; yet the other tie still remains, as these tender, last arrangements show.

v. 28.—*Knowing that all things were now accomplished ;* rather, "brought to their appointed end," "finished." (It is surprising that the A.V. translates the same word "accomplished" here and "finished" in v. 30.) This is not the sigh of a wearied soul but the utterance of one who has accomplished His mission in triumph.

That the scripture might be fulfilled ; to be taken with the following words. The Evangelist implies that the whole Scriptural picture of the fortunes of the Messiah has now been completed.

I thirst. We have seen how careful John is to find exact fulfilments of Scripture in actions and sayings of Jesus, and in certain events in His life. This is characteristic of early Christian argument against Judaism, calculated to prove that Jesus was the Messiah foreshadowed. It need scarcely be said that, like much Jewish argument, it is not to be regarded as necessarily final for us. We must always distinguish in reading Scripture between fact and the interpretation of fact by the writers.

It is remarkable that, according to this Gospel, the utterance of Jesus, next to the final one on the Cross, is a confession of real human weakness. This is also an utterance that completes the prophetic picture. Without this real humanity Jesus would have been an incomplete Messiah. Evidently there is here an apologetic purpose as against Docetic doctrine (pp. 18 ff.).

v. 29.—*Vinegar*: the sour wine which the soldiers had brought for their own use.

Put a sponge upon hyssop. By hyssop is evidently meant not a juice or powder, but a twig of that plant known as hyssop. In the Old Testament it was used for the purpose of ceremonial sprinkling (Num. xix. 18). In Matt. xxvii. 48; Mark xv. 36 it is a reed on which the sponge is placed. Why John substitutes "hyssop" for "reed" is quite obscure. No doubt he has some symbolic idea in his mind.¹

This offering of sour wine was the result of compassion on the part of some, or one, of the soldiers. It is distinct from the stupefying potion of Matt. xxvii. 34; Mark xv. 23, which Jesus apparently refused. Matthew alone recognises this distinction. In the other two Synoptics, the second offering of wine is accompanied by jeering, which seems to imply that it was a renewed offering of the drugged potion, given to criminals before execution.

v. 30.—*Bowing the head*, *He gave up the spirit*; or, "rendered up." The "spirit" was regarded as the immaterial element that enters the body at birth, and leaves at death. Here, however, John implies a double meaning. For him the death of Jesus meant the setting free of the Holy Spirit for all. The "Spirit" is not "given" until xx. 22, because Jesus was "not yet glorified" (vii. 39). What happens to the "spirit" in the interval before the Resurrection is a question John does not ask, and therefore does not answer. Also it is to be noted that

¹ G. E. Post, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 442, argues that a substance, "hyssop," is here meant, which, mingled with the sour wine, would have a cooling effect on the mouth. But the Greek seems against this.

the death of Jesus is represented as voluntary on His part, right to the very end. Both verbs, "bowed," "gave up," denote voluntary action. Luke expresses the voluntariness by the saying, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (xxii. 46). Matt. xxvii. 50 has "expired," an ordinary Greek expression.

The Sign of the Pierced Side, vv. 31-37.

v. 31.—*The Preparation, i.e.* the day before the Passover.

That the bodies . . . high day. The Roman practice was to leave the bodies of crucified criminals to the dogs and vultures. By Jewish law (Deut. xxi. 23) the body of a criminal must be removed before nightfall. The Evangelist, however, stresses the fact that the next day was a very particular Sabbath which coincided with the Passover (*cf.* Lev. xxiii. 7, 15).

v. 33.—Great emphasis is laid on the fact that Jesus was already dead. The action of the soldiers testifies to the fact. Perhaps this is to be connected with the thought of *v. 30*, with its emphasis on the voluntariness of Jesus' death.

v. 34.—*Blood and water.* Here we are met with a bewildering variety of interpretation. To my mind Professor Burkitt's words in his *Gospel History and Transmission* (p. 233) are at once the simplest and most convincing explanation. According to 1 John v. 6-8 the living personality has in it three elements, viz., spirit, water, blood. From the water we are begotten; by the blood we are sustained; and the spirit or breath is the immaterial element that enters at birth and leaves at death. The spirit quitted Jesus when He died, leaving behind the water and blood of a human body, the existence of which was demonstrated to the onlookers by the spear-thrust of the soldier. According to this interpretation, the Evangelist is again concerned to defend the crucifixion of Jesus against the Docetic theory that only a phantom Jesus was crucified.

In the second account of creation in Genesis ii., water was the physical element (along with the dust of the ground) out of which the body of man was formed (*cf.* Gen. ii. 6, 7), where a flood ("mist,"

A.V., R.V.) moistens the earth, apparently that man and vegetation might be created. We also find a reference in Esdras viii. 3 to "water" as a creative element in the womb.

Another interpretation is that the "water" and the "blood" have a symbolical reference to the two sacraments. Westcott's explanation in his commentary is entirely fanciful. Whether medical evidence can really support the evidence for the fact on which the Evangelist is reflecting is extremely doubtful (see Westcott, and Hastings, *DCG*, i. p. 216).

v. 35.—Whatever the physiological facts are, the Evangelist lays great stress on the phenomenon as a "sign."

He knoweth. Most probably "He" refers to Jesus, as several times in the First Epistle (iii. 3, 5, etc.); but this is disputed.

vv. 36, 37.—Again the insistence on the fulfilment of Scripture (Exod. xii. 46; Num. ix. 12; Ps. xxxiv. 20; Zech. xii. 10; cf. Rev. i. 7). Jesus on the Cross, with unbroken limbs, symbolises the paschal lamb. Previously John has made it clear that the Crucifixion day was not the Passover, but the day before, on which the paschal lamb was slain (xiii. 1). The passage cited from Zechariah actually and historically refers to the lamentation of Jerusalem over the "good" Shepherd whom it has slain: some unknown Jewish martyr.

The Burial, vv. 38-42.

v. 39.—Objection is sometimes taken to the large amount of ingredients used here for embalming, 100 pounds. According to our scale the weight would be about 69 lbs. A large quantity would, however, be required, especially if the body was laid on a bed formed of these ingredients, as in 2 Chron. xvi. 14. The action was performed on a regal scale, as was befitting. The anointing of Mary is regarded by Jesus as an anticipation of the embalming of His dead body (see notes on xii. 3, 7).

v. 42.—The tomb is chosen because it was near, and there was no time to remove the body elsewhere before the Passover day began at 6 p.m.

CHAPTER XXI

III.

III. 3. The Triumph of Jesus: Resurrection and Reunion with the Church, xx.

The Empty Grave.—vv. 1-18.

v. 1.—*Early*; cf. note on xviii. 28.

While it was yet dark; cf. Mark xvi. 2 (R.V.), and Luke xxiv. 1-4; probably between 3 and 6 a.m.

v. 2.—*We know not*. Although Mary appears to come alone, she speaks as though others were with her (cf. Mark xvi. 1; Matt. xxviii. 1; Luke xxiv. 10).¹

v. 5.—*Stooping down*: so that he might clear the entrance to the tomb. He then "peered in" and saw the linen clothes lying. He did not enter, perhaps through natural dread of the place.

vv. 6, 7.—*Simon Peter went into the sepulchre and seeth*;

¹ Certain reasons for assigning vv. 2-10 to **R.** may be indicated: (1) Mary speaks as though she had not come alone. Note that in *v. 13* Mary speaks in the first person singular. (2) In *v. 11*, Mary stands where she was in *v. 1*. (3) What Mary sees in *v. 12*, is different from what Peter and John see in *vv. 6, 7*. (4) Is it likely that Mary would communicate with the disciples twice—in *v. 2* and again with a definite commission in *v. 17*? In general it may be said that **R.** tends to lay more stress on the empty grave than the Johannine writer. As in xi. 38-44, and in xx. 24-29, he probably has in mind those who could not rest upon the spiritual experience of others as proof of the resurrection, but must have some assurance that the stern and ghastly facts of death and the grave were surmounted by Jesus.

rather, as in R.V., "beholdeth." The word implies that he looked more carefully ("gazed") than John, who "glanced." Peter sees more than John. He sees the linen clothes that wrapped the body and the napkin for the head "rolled up in a place by itself" (R.V.). Evidently there has been no hurried robbery of the body, but a deliberate act.

v. 8.—*John saw and believed.* John believes in the *fact* of the resurrection. This is not the same as to experience it in one's own life. It is not said that Peter believed.

v. 9.—This, however, is still an inferior stage of faith. It is implied that the "sign" of the empty tomb should have been unnecessary, if they had fully understood the Scriptures (*cf.* ii. 22 ; Luke xxiv. 27). Jesus Himself, in this Gospel (ii. 19 ; x. 18 ; xii. 24), foretells His resurrection only in general expressions, and in mysterious imagery. In Luke xxiv. 26, 27, 32, 44-47, it is presupposed that the Old Testament Scriptures are interpreted as referring to His sufferings and resurrection by the risen Lord. Evidently, in the circle of thought which this Gospel represents, far more stress is laid on the prophecy of Scripture, and on spiritual experience, than on the empty tomb as proofs of the resurrection of Jesus.

v. 11.—*As she wept, she stooped down and looked into the tomb ;* lit. "stooped down into the tomb" ; *cf.* v. 5. The angels are a vision seen through tears.

The natural moisture of the eye at all times is necessary in order to clear the vision of sensible things. A perfectly dry eye would see nothing. The tears of grief may also quicken vision (*cf.* Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, 1, 2).

v. 13.—*Woman :* again a perfectly tender word ; Mary now says, *My Lord*.

v. 14.—*Knew not.* Her hopelessness prevented recognition ; she who saw angels could not see Jesus. All curious speculation as to the appearance of Jesus' glorified body is out of place here. Had the Evangelist meant that there was anything abnormal about Jesus in outward appearance, he would not have told us that she thought He was the gardener.

v. 15.—She addressed him as "Sir." To her mind, he is

master of the situation, and he alone could have buried Jesus elsewhere. It is touching to note that she implies that the "gardener" could think only of One, whose name she does not mention, and whose identity she does not indicate.

Borne. The word indicates the lifting of a heavy object, like the cross (*cf.* xix. 17). Equally touching, if we remember this, are the words that follow, "I will take Him away," *i.e.* bury Him elsewhere than in a nameless grave. She is ready to overtax her strength to save His body from dishonour.

v. 16.—The mention of her name calls up a flood of memories. He had often used it. It recalls a whole past of shame, forgiveness, and triumph. She is beginning to *experience* the risen Lord; only then does she *recognise* Him. Apparently she had again turned her back on the supposed gardener and was gazing into the tomb.

Rabboni; not Hebrew, but a dialect of Hebrew which Jesus and His disciples spoke—Aramaic. The Evangelist translates it by "Master" or "Teacher." It is a higher and more respectful title than "Rabbi" (*cf.* Mark x. 51). The R.V. alone tells us that her reply is in Aramaic; she would naturally speak in the familiar vernacular at such a moment.

v. 17.—*Touch Me not.* These words have had many explanations. Undoubtedly the most satisfactory is that followed by Godet in his Commentary (iii. p. 315). The word denotes a touch, intended not to hold the object, but to possess it; to "attach oneself to" a person.

There is a peculiar Johannine meaning running all through this chapter. Two points may be noted:—(1) Just as in *v.* 9 it is indicated that there is a higher and fuller stage of faith than that based on the ground of the physical fact of the empty tomb, so here it is indicated that Mary (and through her Jesus is speaking to the Christian Church) was forbidden to regard even a resurrection appearance as a basis for an abiding and perfect faith. (2) In this chapter there is suggested a very subtle distinction between the appearances of Jesus before the Ascension, and those after the Ascension. The real attachment to, and communion with Jesus takes place after the

Ascension. "Touch Me not; for I have not yet ascended to the Father" (*cf.* xvi. 16, "ye shall see Me because I go to the Father," and vi. 62).

Touch Me not . . . but go, etc. The meaning here must not be missed; the one half of the verse explains the other. Mary's mission is to tell the disciples *that Jesus is ascended to the Father*. The Ascension, in the view of the Evangelist, takes place some time between the events of *vv.* 11-18 and *vv.* 19-29. This is clearly implied in *vv.* 17, 18. As a basis for faith the Resurrection is incomplete without the Ascension. Not direct from the empty grave, but from the "glory" with the Father, Jesus returns to re-form the tie that has been broken, and to bestow the Holy Spirit. Only then would the disciples be able to come into real and abiding communion with Him.

Two questions naturally arise and call for answer:—

(1) What is the reason for this strange view of the resurrection appearances? It must be sought again in the contemporary situation. Those for whom John wrote might think that they were asked to rest their conviction of the victory of Jesus over death on a less sure basis than those who had seen Him just after He had risen from the grave. "Not so," says the Evangelist; "His promise was that He would come again from glory and so establish His abiding presence" (*cf.* xiv. 22, 23; xvi. 16). He is writing for those who feel that they could not believe, unless they had seen the empty grave, and the Risen Lord, standing beside it, as Mary did.

(2) What, then, is the meaning of the appearances described in *vv.* 19-29? These appearances are of a different character. They are appearances *after* the Ascension, and herald a communion that can never be interrupted (see notes).

v. 17.—*I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God*; lit. "I am ascending." The action is identical with the act of speaking. The thought really implies, "Both you and I must go further; you to the brethren, I to the Father."

Note the distinction implied in the verse. Jesus is Son of God in a unique sense. The Evangelist always uses different words

for Jesus and men regarded as sons of God (pp. 37 ff.). Therefore "My Father and your Father," not "our Father."

The Appearance to the Assembled Disciples, vv. 19-23.

v. 19.—The doors were shut. This, therefore, is a more wonderful appearance than that to Mary, in the free air of the garden; a more wonderful appearance than at the empty grave. The company included many who had not seen the empty grave. The Greek really reads, "the doors being fast closed."

Stood in the midst. Cf. Matt. xviii. 20. None saw Him enter. Many a Christian assembly in time of persecution, meeting in secret with shut doors, must have taken courage from these words, and realised the same experience.

Peace be unto you. An ordinary daily greeting, charged on Jesus' lips with a triumphant sense of victory. "Jesus takes the word, humbled and impoverished, and makes such use of it that it is no longer trivial, but has the force of a command for their hearts" (W. M. Macgregor, *Jesus Christ the Son of God*, p. 165). It is in this atmosphere of triumphant peace that He shows them His wounds. "All the painful emotion through which they had passed, the fear which they still felt, all their former and present trouble, must give place to complete serenity in the certainty that God is for them" (Godet).

Note that "My peace I bequeath unto you" (xiv. 27) was Jesus' last word to the disciples as He led them out to Gethsemane. Through what experiences had He and they passed since then! "He showed them His hands and His side."

It is essential for the student here to realise that the mental perplexity involved in understanding John's view of the Resurrection and Ascension is not in vain if it drives him back on what, for this Evangelist, is the bed-rock fact of it all, that his own and his companions' fear was turned into victory and joy. It does not matter how the experience was mediated to them. Paul was not in that room "with the doors shut," but he can nevertheless write Phil. iv. 7; Col. iii. 15; Rom. viii.

35-39. *The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord* (cf. xiv. 28 ; xvi. 22).

v. 21.—The message of peace is repeated ; this time not so much for personal reassurance, as to nerve them for their mission to the world. The two words for “ send ” are not the same in this verse. “ As the Father hath sent (*apostellō*) Me so send (*pempō*) I you.” Jesus is the ambassador ; the disciples are His envoys.

v. 22.—*He breathed on them*, etc. Jesus has conferred an office on them ; now He confers the gift without which the office is useless.

Breathed is symbolical. Perhaps the Evangelist has at least two thoughts in his mind : (1) one with which we are already familiar, that the Spirit is a direct gift of the historical and risen Jesus (cf. xx. 31). The way in which historical fact is treated in the Gospel is meant to establish this. As in Paul’s time (1 Cor. xii.-xiv.) the Spirit in the Christian Church was in danger of being sublimated into a merely ecstatic experience. (2) Jesus (like the *Logos*) is the author of a new spiritual creation (cf. Gen. ii. 7, and i. 1-18).

Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whatever difficulties it may occasion in our minds, there is no doubt that the Evangelist here describes what for him is equivalent to Pentecost (Acts ii. 1). Luke separates by a definite interval of time the Ascension and Pentecost (Acts i. 8). In the thought of the Fourth Evangelist, the gift of the Holy Spirit is the climax of the Resurrection. The Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost are all moments in one great event (cf. xii. 31, 32). They are, as it were, telescoped.

Receive ye, or “ take ye.” A personal act of faith is involved. Jesus similarly speaks of “ receiving ” the kingdom. For John the kingdom has come when the Holy Spirit is given.

The Holy Ghost, or “ Spirit ” ; lit. “ Holy Spirit.” The article is absent, but this has not the significance given to it by Westcott (and others) in his commentary. Violence must not be done to the interpretation of the Gospel by attempting to harmonise it with Acts ii. 1 ff. Luke xxiv. 51 must be

regarded as his description of the Ascension or final parting of Jesus from His disciples. The account in Acts i. 9 is another and fuller version which Luke found in one of his sources.

If the absence of the article means anything at all it must mean not "a gift of the Holy Spirit, in preparation for Pentecost," but "Holy Spirit" in the sense of the complete gift of what Pentecost stands for. If we feel that there is a contradiction between the Johannine and Lucan accounts, we must accept it, as we do other contradictions in Scripture. The main thing about Pentecost is not how or when the Spirit came, but that it was the birthday of the Christian Church.

v. 23—a very difficult verse. Westcott says, "The pronouns in this case are unemphatic"—a very important point. Moreover, this is a gathering of disciples, including the apostles (v. 19), and what is said to the latter is said to the whole company. Along some such line as this we must look for the explanation. There can be no doubt that the Fourth Gospel contains the idea of the Christian Church as a body of believers, separate from the world (*cf.* xvii 6, 14, etc.). There is also the idea still lingering that the time is short, and that Jesus will "appear" shortly; not "come again," for He has come in the Holy Spirit (*cf.* 1 John iii. 12). The attitude of the world towards the message of that little community is final and absolute. To accept the person of Jesus as the Son of God is to receive forgiveness of sins. To reject Him is to have sin retained (*cf.* viii. 24; ix. 41). We must always remember in interpreting a passage like this that the Jew often confuses our distinction of cause and effect (pp. 121 f.). As a matter of fact many did reject Jesus, and in one sense this can be regarded as the effect of Christian preaching (*cf.* Isa. vi. 9, 10; 2 Cor. ii. 16). To base on this passage theological discussion about the power, or absence of power, inherent in ordination is simply to confuse the issue, and to read into the passage what is not there. The obvious point is that the "apostles" received the "Spirit" by exactly the same channel, and in exactly the same way as the rest of the community. The Pauline conception of the Spirit has done its work. The

Spirit is not the gift of miraculous powers, but a continuous gift of moral judgment, moral decision, and of the power to preach the Gospel of love and forgiveness (v. 23).

The Appearance to Thomas, vv. 24-29.¹

Thomas is not a "doubter" in the usual comprehensive modern sense of the word. His "doubt" is really the result of a rather gloomy temperament, rather than of intellectual difficulty. His personal loyalty to Jesus is unswerving. He will even die with Him (xi. 16). If he only knew where Jesus was going he would follow Him (xiv. 5). In all probability Thomas had seen the actual crucifixion, and the wounds of Jesus, and especially the spear thrust, had so branded themselves on his imagination that he could see nothing else. The "doubt" of Thomas is the result of too little thinking, rather than of too much. "Thomas was confused rather than disbelieving; and his confusion was due more to the defect of character than to badness of heart. He was a man whose heart was more active than his head. And thus he drank into his soul the Lord's teaching and life faster than his mind could frame it into ideas. In the fellowship of his God, though he knew it not, he lived a charmed and enchanted life, dreaming rather than thinking. And when that, out of which he drew his life, was taken away, he was bewildered and hardly knew

¹ Not without some hesitation, vv. 24-29 are here assigned to **R**. The following reasons may be given. It must not, however, be supposed that by assigning the passage to **R**, the devotional value and psychological truth of it are in any way minimised.

(1) The Gospel naturally reaches its *finale* at vv. 22, 23.

(2) The occurrence described in vv. 24-29 is not in the writer's mind in vv. 22, 23; otherwise it would mean that Thomas was excluded from the gift of the Spirit.

(3) The spurious ending to Mark (xvi. 9-20) is evidently based, at least partially, on John xx. The writer agrees in assigning the first appearance to Mary: then he mentions the Emmaus incident; then an appearance to the eleven. There is no room here for a final appearance to Thomas.

where his conflicting feelings were hurrying him " (A. B. Davidson, *The Called of God*, p. 323).

v. 25.—*I will not believe.* Thomas refuses to do violence to one side of his nature at the expense of another. He will not take even the experience of others as overriding his own sorrowful impression of the facts. If the words are petulant, remember that Thomas is suffering under a crushing sorrow. This is no mere abstract question for him, but a real and personal one.

v. 26.—*Thomas with them.* By what means had the others persuaded Thomas to join their worship and share their expectation? We do not know; but we may be certain that they had made him feel that not only had they words for him, but also a warm sympathy. He is facing as a real and personal question the facts of pain and death, and it is good that he finds in Christian fellowship and Christian worship the comfort and assurance he seeks.¹

v. 27.—We may mention that an interesting reading of this verse is found in the very early Sinaitic Syriac Palimpsest, "Reach hither thy finger and *see* My hands, and put thy hand *on* My side, and be not faithless." In v. 25, in the usual Greek text, the word for "print" is *typos*, the mark left by a blow. In the same verse of the palimpsest just mentioned the Syriac word is evidently a translation of *topos*, "place." Has *typos* been substituted by a scribe for *topos*? The reading, *topos*, is actually found in some MSS. If *tōpos* be the true reading, does it mean that the wounds are regarded as healed? Is

¹ Beware of much isolated *talk* about the problem of suffering. It is a common topic in student circles. All these problems are questions of individual men and women. What is the verdict they pass on their own experience? Have we any right to ignore as a very large part of our facts what thousands tell us and have told, that pain has brought them nearer to Jesus Christ? Is it not also a fact that nine-tenths of the pain and suffering of the world is due to the sin of individuals, either their own misdoing or the indifference, vested interests, cruelty, and love of luxury, of others?

Thomas asked to put his hand on the "place" where the wounds were? In other words, *the wounds are healed*, though the scars are there. If so, realise what the vision meant for Thomas. It meant that not only is Jesus alive, but that the wounds which so possessed the thought of Thomas are healed. Death, he would come to see, is not a destroyer but a healer, when interpreted by the vision of the living Jesus. He was "wounded for our transgressions," and, through the experience, He has become a living Saviour.

v. 28.—My Lord and My God. This expression of the Divinity of Jesus is the fruit of experience, and not a mere expression of intellectual assent. What is it here that so deepens Thomas's experience and produces such faith? It would appear that he does not need now to touch the wounds although invited to do so.

Thomas has developed a new "sense."

(1) The sense that the very form of words in which he clothed his unbelief is known to Jesus (*v. 27*). Jesus has sympathy with his state of mind, and quotes his very words.

(2) The sense of the victory gained over sin and death in the healed wounds. "He rises at a single bound from the lowest depths of faith to its very pinnacle" (Godet).

v. 29.—Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed. Jesus says to Thomas, "Because...thou hast believed" (or, as some read, "Hast thou believed?"). Perhaps the interrogative form brings out the rebuke better. The perfect is merely an emphatic form of the present (*cf. vi. 69*).

For what is Thomas rebuked? It is because he required a sign, an actual appearance of the risen and glorified Lord. The Gospel ends where it began, with an insistence on the permanent value of the experience of the Apostolic Church (*i. 14-18, 51*) for the faith of those who were to come after, to whom no such visions were given. The Evangelist has readers like ourselves in view (*cf. 1 Pet. i. 8*). In the Gospel records we are in touch with the main stream of Christian experience. It is like a stream of molten lava, arising out of the hearts of men and women of whom only some companied

with Jesus upon earth and saw Him after death, whose fire miraculously has not hardened into rock, and whose glow is still luminous across the centuries. That fire and that glow are the inspiration of the New Testament. We have no bare, unemotional facts about Jesus Christ. Hermann (*Communion with God*, p. 154) says that we lay hold of the inner life of Jesus in that report which has come down to us from the Christian Brotherhood. When we learn to see Him there, then we are at once set free from mere dependence on that report, and move on the firm ground of personal experience. The experience of the earliest witnesses and companions of Jesus brought forth, as the acorn brings forth the oak, the doctrine of His Divinity. It was produced not by argument but as inevitably and as spontaneously as Thomas's confession, "My Lord and my God," while he discarded the test he had himself prepared. Water is useless for quenching thirst when it is resolved into its constituent elements of hydrogen and oxygen, however useful for scientific purposes that process may be. Water in its natural form is the life-giving and refreshing fact as we know it. So it is with the New Testament witness to the Divinity of Jesus. That witness is being verified to-day in countless individual lives. This is the work of the Spirit of Truth. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

vv. 30, 31, are dealt with in the Introduction (pp. 13 ff.).

CHAPTER XXII

The Appendix to the Gospel (xxi. 1-25).

Quite naturally, we feel that with xx. 30, 31, the Gospel has reached its conclusion. We are therefore surprised to find that yet another series of post-resurrection incidents are recorded in chap. xxi. Is this chapter an afterthought on the part of the Evangelist? Or, has it been added by another hand? The second hypothesis is the more probable, and can claim most support from critics. In any case, this Appendix must be very early in date, as there is not the slightest trace in any MS. of a version of the Gospel without it.

The chapter divides itself into three main parts :—

1. vv. 1-14.—An appearance of Jesus to a group of disciples at the Lake of Tiberias.

2. vv. 15-17.—The restoration of Peter.

3. vv. 18-23. A prophecy of the martyrdom of Peter and the death of John.

4. vv. 24, 25.—A final ending to the Gospel.

1. vv. 1-14.—**The Appearance by the Lake.** The reader should compare the story in Luke v. 1-11, especially—

(1) Luke, v. 5 and v. 3, "That night they took nothing."

(2) Luke, v. 6 and v. 11, "For all there were so many, the net was not broken."

(3) Luke, v. 8 and v. 7.

(4) Jesus' words to Simon Peter in Luke v. 10 and the scene that follows in vv. 15-17.

There can be little doubt that the writer, in this exquisite story, means to symbolise the work of the Apostolic Church. Note how they enter upon their work at Peter's suggestion

(v. 3). It is entirely fanciful to suppose that any mood of despair is intended. Failure comes : " that night they caught nothing." Jesus appears with the dawn, " when day was now breaking " (v. 4). They did not recognise Him until they cast the net on the " right " side of the boat (*cf.* Ezek. xlvii. 1, 2), at His command. " The disciples whom Jesus loved " has the insight to recognise Jesus, and to make Him known to the others. The large catch is landed, and consists of 153 fishes. Jerome, commenting on Ezek. xlvii. 12, tells us that in the natural history of his day, 153 was supposed to be the number of distinct species of fish (*cf.* Matt. xiii. 47). The number is a symbol, meaning that every conceivable kind of man is drawn into the Gospel net. " The net is not broken," in contrast to Luke v. 6. The Church's resources, with the *risen* Christ in its midst, are never overstrained. We may notice also that Jesus makes a contribution (v. 9), and they add their contribution to His ; that a great awe settles upon them, and all " questioning " is stilled.

2. vv. 15-17.—The Restoration of Peter.

The significance of the story turns (1) on a subtle distinction between two words for " love," as is pointed out in the margin of the R.V. The words are *agapaō*, and *phileō*. Of these, so far as a distinction between them is observable in Greek literature, *phileō* would seem to be the nobler word, used of the affection that exists between members of the same family, and *agapaō*, of the affection between benefactor and recipient. In the Gospel itself no valid distinction is observable between the two words. Here, evidently, a distinction is implied, and it is probably that just suggested. To love Jesus as a benefactor, and to love Him for Himself, are lower and higher stages of love. The distinction may roughly, and rather inaccurately, be brought out in English by using " like " for the first, and " love " for the second.

Apply the distinction to the Dialogue. Jesus says (v. 15), " *Liketh* thou Me more than these (others) ? " (probably referring to the fact that Peter had shown such marked affection and eagerness, in v. 7). Peter replies, " Thou knowest that I

love Thee." Jesus answers, "Feed My lambs." The question and answer are the same in *v.* 16, and Jesus replies this time with the charge, "Tend My sheep" or "Shepherd My sheep." The third time, however, Jesus puts the question in the form, using Peter's twice-repeated word, "Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest thou Me?*" Peter is "grieved," *not* that Jesus asked him three times, but *that the third time He put the question in this form*, seeming to cast the doubt on what he had already said. He replies, with passionate emphasis, "Lord, Thou knowest" ¹ (by intuition) "all things; Thou knowest" ¹ (by experience of me) that I *love Thee.*" Jesus' answer is to give Peter the shepherd's most responsible task. "Feed my sheep" (not only the lambs, as in *v.* 15).

3. vv. 18-23.—A Prophecy of Peter's Martyrdom, and of the Death of John.

In *v.* 18 the "girding" no doubt again refers particularly to Peter's act in *v.* 7, and generally to his youthful energy. A day will come when the hands of the executioner will "gird" him for the cross. Then he will be able to fulfil his promise in *xiii.* 37. Note how Jesus is represented, not as distrusting Peter's finest impulses, but as deepening and strengthening them, until impulse and feeling grow into a settled conviction and purpose that will be "faithful unto death." The incident in *vv.* 20-23 evidently has reference to the fact that the Apostle John is dead, notwithstanding that a promise of Jesus was known that he would be alive at His coming. By a rather subtle interpretation of Jesus' words, the writer explains away the difficulty. He emphasises the hypothetical nature of what Jesus had said. Most readers will feel that he gives no real or satisfying answer to a problem that must have arisen in the case of the death of other Christians than the Apostle. Peter's question really reads, "And this man, what?" The reply of Jesus is intentionally pregnant with meaning, and implies that there are some forms of religious curiosity that really hinder our Christian life.

4. vv. 24, 25.—See Introduction, p. 60.

¹ Two different words.

APPENDIX

SUGGESTIONS TO LEADERS OF STUDY CIRCLES

1. Any serious discussion of the Fourth Gospel will raise some of the most difficult questions of New Testament study. Disappointment and perhaps perplexity may be saved if circle-leaders realise this before deciding to take up the course suggested in this book. Theological students might very profitably form circles on the book, as it will help them in relating their academic studies to the needs of daily life.

2. As the book is rather more difficult than the ordinary study text-book, we have not attempted to make up weekly studies, but have merely suggested questions for each chapter (except in the case of the Introduction). Some of the questions are so comprehensive that one alone will probably use up the available time at one meeting. A certain number of questions are equally relevant to several chapters (especially is this true of the questions on Chapters XIV. to XVIII.).

3. Leaders and their circles, therefore, will have to decide for themselves (a meeting in advance) how much ground they are going to cover each week, which questions they are going to discuss and which omit. They will be well advised to cover a little ground thoroughly rather than the whole ground cursorily.

The Introduction is in many ways the most important part of the book. It should not only be read as an introduction, but also as a conclusion, and as a continual source of reference.

5. We would warn circles against letting difficulties and problems figure too largely in their discussions. They cannot

be ignored, nor can they always be solved. Often it will be sufficient to realise that the problem or the difficulty is there. The interest of the Gospel is not in the difficulties which it raises, but in its bearing upon spiritual life and on the significance of the risen Christ. This emphasis should be kept in the discussions.

6. For the same reason students would do well to re-read the Gospel after the discussions are over, looking solely to its spiritual teaching and using it as a help to meditation and prayer.

7. The Fourth Gospel gains less than most books from being read in a modern translation. Of modern translations the best is Dr Moffatt's. Those who can should read the original Greek. All should use a note-book. As far as possible the members of the circle should look up the references and some of the books referred to in the bibliography at the beginning.

8. The following pamphlets on Study Circles should be read by circle members, especially by all leaders :—

Study Circles and their Leadership. S.C.M., 3½d. post free.

The Leadership of a Bible Study Circle. S.C.M., 3½d. post free.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

CHAPTERS I. AND II

(Read also Chapter III. of Introduction)

St John i. 1-34

1. What does the Evangelist mean by Logos? Why does he use the Greek word? Where does it come from?

2. "The Law was given by Moses: Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ." What are the main differences between the faith of the Old Testament and of the New Testament?

3. What do you know of the work and character and ideas of John the Baptist or of his followers, from other sources? (e.g. the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, Josephus; cf. E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, chapter iii.).

CHAPTERS III. AND IV

St John i. 35-iii.

1. What was the significance of the 'sign' at the marriage feast? Is it merely the lesson which is usually drawn from the story?
2. Are Jesus and Nicodemus in the same 'world'? What are the characteristics of the 'realm' in which Jesus moves?
3. How does Jesus 'judge' men?
4. In what way do these chapters illustrate the Evangelist's purpose and method in writing? (*Cf.* also the Introduction, Chapters I. and II.)

CHAPTER V

St John iv. 1-54

1. What is the main theme of this chapter (*vv.* 1-42)?
2. In what way is it an argument and incentive for missions?
3. "Our Lord's regard for woman was far in advance of His own day and ours." What was the status of women in Jewry? How does this incident support this statement? Do you agree?
4. What is spiritual worship?

CHAPTER VI

St John v. 1-47

1. What are the arguments used in this chapter to prove the divinity of Christ? Are they convincing?
 2. What is a 'miracle'? In what sense might it be 'a sign,' *i.e.* influence faith? Are miracles as you have defined them possible?
- (*E.g.* discuss the question generally before you discuss whether a certain miracle actually took place—the first is a theological question and the second is one of historical evidence.)

CHAPTER VII

St John vi. 1-71

1. The great thought of this chapter is that the real spiritual presence of Christ is found not only in the Eucharist but everywhere. Do you agree with this exposition?

2. Does faith render intellectual and moral effort unnecessary?

3. Have some people no religious faculty? Does God not give it to them? Discuss in relation to the reasons put forward in the chapter to explain the Jews' rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. (This question might be discussed with the following one on Chapter VIII.)

CHAPTER VIII

St John vii.

1. What was the current Jewish idea of the Messiah? How did Jesus contravene it? How does the Evangelist show that the popular conception was a misconception?

2. Why is vii. 53-viii. 11 "*certainly* not part of this Gospel"?

CHAPTER IX

St John viii. 12-59

1. What is meant by saying Jesus was 'sinless'? What proof have we?

2. "Before Abraham was, I am." What does this mean?

CHAPTER X

St John ix. 1-41

1. What is implied in calling God 'omniscient'? Are there things which God does not know? Does He know when you are going to do wrong and what wrong you are going to do?

2. What is the relation of sin to suffering? What were the ideas of the Jews on the subject? (*cf.* Peake, *The Problem of*

Suffering in the Old Testament). What light does this chapter throw on the problem? What does it suggest our attitude towards suffering should be?

CHAPTER XI *St John x. 1-42*

1. How would you interpret 'fold,' 'flock'?
2. What is a parable? How does it differ from an allegory?
3. What does 'works' mean in this Gospel?
4. The Christian regarded Jesus as God: to the Jew this was a denial of monotheism. How was it not?

CHAPTER XII *St John xi. 1-46*

1. Why did Jesus delay in going to Bethany?
2. Do you agree with the exposition of Chapter XII.? If not, where and why not?

CHAPTER XIII *St John xi. 47-xii. 36*

1. Try to sketch the character of Mary.
2. Was the Crucifixion predestined by God and were the Jewish rulers, etc., the unconscious accomplices in fulfilling His purpose?
3. How can the death of Jesus be regarded as victory over sin?

CHAPTER XIV *St John xiii. 1-30*

1. Why does the Evangelist omit the Last Supper?
2. Has the Church learnt the lesson of xiii. 1-17?
3. Why did Jesus make Judas Iscariot one of the Twelve, if He knew from the beginning that he would turn traitor? Does the Evangelist prove too much? (*Cf.* the Synoptic portrait of Judas.) (*Cf.* Notes on xv. 1-8.)

CHAPTER XV
St John xv. 1-27

1. Is the value or truth of the discourses in this Gospel lessened because they are not *verbatim*?
2. "Abide in Me and I in you." What does being in Christ mean?
3. What does Jesus mean by Love? "Love one another."
4. "Ye are not of the world." Is the distinction between the World and the Church a real one to-day? (See also Chapter VIII.)
5. How can a man be guilty of sin if he does not know? Is ignorance a sin?

CHAPTER XVI
St John xvi. 1-33

1. "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life." What does that belief mean? How is it shown? How does the Spirit of Truth glorify Jesus?
2. Has the Evangelist a different idea of the Second Coming from that found in the earlier Gospels? What do you understand by the Second Coming? (This question may be taken in Chapter XVII.)
3. "If ye shall ask anything in My name that will I do." What does asking in His Name mean and demand of us?
4. "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you." Does this contradict St Paul's idea of Christ interceding for us at God's right hand? Does it throw light on the subject of the Invocation of the Saints?

CHAPTER XVII
St John xiii. 31b-xiv. 31

1. "The influence of the contemporary situation is more marked here than anywhere else in the Gospel, and its re-

cognition more useful for purposes of interpretation." Do you agree (a) that it is more marked, (b) that this conjecture is "useful for purposes of interpretation"? Why is it useful?

2. "Shew us the Father." Is the Fatherhood of God revealed apart from Jesus? *E.g.* in Nature, Human Life, in the Old Testament and other religions?

CHAPTER XVIII

St John xvii. 1-26

1. What is the history of the word 'holy' in the Bible? What does it signify?

2. "For their sakes." How and why?

3. "The Church is perfected unto one." In what sense 'one'? Uniformity?

CHAPTER XIX

St John xviii.-xix. 16

1. Should we be perplexed by the differences in the accounts in the four evangelists of the same events, especially the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptists? If not, why not?

2. (a) Why did Peter deny our Lord?

(b) Why did the crowd reject Him?

3. "What is truth"? Why did Pilate ask the question? How would you answer it?

CHAPTER XX

St John xix. 17-42

1. To what extent is the Evangelist's account of the Crucifixion figurative and symbolical? (*Cf.* the other accounts.)

2. "It is finished." In what sense would the Centurion have understood these words? In what sense do you?

3. "That the Scripture might be fulfilled." In what way did Jesus 'fulfil' the Scriptures? Discuss the use of the Old Testament in the Gospels.

CHAPTER XXI

St John xx.

1. Can we believe in the Resurrection and at the same time question the accuracy of the story of the Empty Tomb? What are the evidences for the Resurrection? (*Cf. Foundations.*)
2. What is the Evangelist's view of the Resurrection and Ascension? Is it St Luke's?
3. What do you imagine was the cause of Thomas's doubt and trouble?
4. What does 'Peace' signify in the New Testament? (This can be discussed under Chapters XVII. or XXII.)

CHAPTER XXII

St John xxi.

1. What is the message of this story to the Church to-day?
2. How was this Gospel compiled? Does the theory put forward in the Introduction seem to fit the facts?
3. (a) Is the value to us of the Gospel unaffected by the question of how it was composed?
(b) What is its supreme value?



25 March

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